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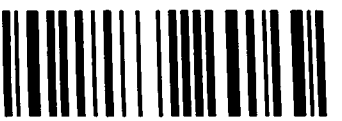
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INTRODUCTION

TO

THE APOCALYPSE.

The Apocalypse is the great final prophecy of the Church of Christ, written by St. John, the last survivor of the Apostles, during his banishment in the Isle of Patmos, about the year of our Lord 97, in the time of the Emperor Domitian.

Its purpose was to prepare the Asiatic Churches for the impending persecution, which was to commence under the Emperor Trajan, and be continued until the acknowledgment of Christianity under the Emperor Constantine; and to detail to the universal Church the leading events of her future history down to the end of the world; shewing that the true Faith should be either directly persecuted, or remain in a narrow and depressed state, during the whole [illegible] of the Christian Church.

notwithstanding, be sustained, that its oppressors should be punished from time to time, until their final extinction by the consummate act of the Divine power and justice; and that the Church, the body of the faithful in all nations, should thenceforth enjoy a splendid and miraculous prosperity for a long, yet limited, period, closing with the general resurrection.

The Apocalypse is a collection of Divine visions, seen probably at different times, yet all during the Apostle's exile. It consists of six distinct portions:—The Vision of the Asiatic Churches[1].—The Vision of the Seals, or general view of Providence in the government of the Church and the World, beginning with the period of Constantine, and ending with the close of the final age of Mankind[2].—The Vision of the Trumpets[3],—the Vision of the Vials[4], which two are identical, and describe the inflictions laid upon the persecutors of the Church, beginning from the establishment of the Inquisition, and closing with the final ruin of the Popedom in the triumph of Christianity.—The Vision of the Church[5], distinguished into the three æras of Pagan persecution, Papal perse-

[1] Ch. i. ii. iii. [2] Ch. iv. v. vi. vii. [3] Ch. viii. ix. x. xi.
[4] Ch. xv. xvi. with the connected chapters xvii. xviii. xix.
[5] Ch. xi. xiv.

cution, and the catastrophe of her oppressors.—The Vision of the triumph of Christianity[6].

It will be shewn in the course of the Interpretation, that this prophecy includes in the most direct manner all those great events which make the frame-work of History since the first age of Christianity; that it distinctly predicts—

The establishment of the Church under Constantine and his successors.

The overthrow of the Roman Empire.

The erection of the Barbarian Kingdoms on its ruin.

The rise of the Popedom.

The establishment of the Inquisition.

The persecution of the first reformers.

The successive punishments laid on Italy, Spain, and France, as the three powers by which the Inquisition was let loose against Protestantism; namely, The papal factions, and French wars of the fourteenth century.—The destruction of the Spanish Armada.—The civil war following the overthrow of Protestantism in France in 1685.—The wars of Louis the 14th.

The French Revolution; not narrowed into a few conjectural verses, as is usual; but detailed in an entire and unsuspected Chapter,

[6] Ch. xx. xxi. xxii.

with its peculiar characters of Atheism, and Anarchy; its subsequent despotism, and its final overthrow by the armies of Europe.

The cessation of the Inquisition, and the simultaneous and extraordinary diffusion of the Scriptures.

The remainder of the prophecy is future, and of course beyond any exact interpretation. But it contains the most unquestionable predictions of events, to the magnitude and fierceness of whose havoc of the power, the institutions, and the lives of mankind all the past inflictions are trivial. It is fully predicted that there shall be a sudden revival of Atheism, superstition, and religious violence, acting upon the European nations until they are inflamed into universal war. All the elements of terror and ruin shall be roused; Protestantism persecuted; Popery, after a momentary triumph, utterly destroyed; in a general shock of kingdoms, consummated by some vast and palpable developement of the Divine Power, at once protecting the Church, and extinguishing, in remediless and boundless devastation, infidelity and idolatry.

Apparently for the express purpose of compelling us to believe in a catastrophe so repugnant to our natural impressions and the usual

course of the world, this visitation is prophesied no less than four times[7]; each time with some added terror, and the last with the most overwhelming accumulation of the images of individual and national ruin. It takes successively the language of the prophets exulting over the fall of the great and opulent cities of the east, the broken sceptres, the spoiled wealth and burning palaces and temples of Tyre and Babylon; and of the still sterner denunciations over the crimes of Jerusalem; the images of wild and sudden invasion, and hopeless battle, the massacre, the conflagration, the final crush of polity, power and name. Even the agencies of nature are summoned to deepen the prediction; earthquakes and subterraneous fire, lightnings and ponderous and fatal hail. And in the midst of this chaos of bloodshed, fire and tempest, towers the form of the Avenger, flashing with terrible lustre; crowned and armed with the power and the wrath of Deity against a world that has for so many ages of long-suffering resisted his Spirit, worshipped idols, and enslaved and slain his people—God, a consuming fire!

It is further declared that this catastrophe is now approaching hour by hour; the French

[7] At the close of the Visions of the Seals, the Trumpets, the Vials, and the Church.

Revolution standing as the last great event before it; with but a brief intervening period, occupied by Providence in preparing and securing the Church; in spreading the Scriptures, and in giving a last opportunity to the unbeliever and the idolater to accept the truth of God.

The Apocalypse thus assumes the rank of not merely an elucidation of the Divine will in the past, nor an evidence of the general truth of Christianity, but of a WARNING, of the highest and most pressing nature, to all men, in the entire range of human society. It is not the mere abstract study of the theologian, nor the solitary contemplation of the man of piety. But a great document addressed to the mighty of the earth; Wisdom calling out trumpet-tongued to the leaders of national council; the descended Minister of Heaven, summoning for the last time the nations to awake to the peril already darkening over their heads, and cut themselves loose from those unscriptural and idolatrous faiths, with which they must otherwise go down; the Spirit of God, commanding the teachers and holders of the true faith to prepare themselves by the cultivation of their powers, by a vigilant purity, by a generous and hallowed courage, for that high service of God and man in which

they may so soon be called on to act, and perhaps to suffer; and proclaiming to all men alike the infinite urgency of redeeming the time before the arrival of a period, that to the whole world of idolatry, European and barbarian, shall come with a civil ruin, of which the subversion of Jerusalem was but a type; and with a physical destruction, that can find no parallel but in the inevitable fury of the Deluge.

Yet, vague as those combinations of all the forms of public calamity may appear, we are not left without the means of approaching a more distinct conception. It will be shown in the course of the volume, that this final infliction bears a very singular resemblance to the procedure of the French Revolution; the difference being chiefly in magnitude. The commencement of the French Revolution in Atheism and anarchy, the spirit of hostility to all nations, the sudden change of the whole people into a soldiery, the indignities offered to the popedom, the captivity of sovereigns, the suspension or change of laws and establishments, and even the means by which those horrors were partially combated and restrained—all find their counterparts in the final plague. The chief distinctions are, that the latter, instead of being limited to Europe, incomplete, and apparently under the

sole influence of human means, will be universal, complete, and, at least towards the close, palpably influenced by the action or presence of the Deity.

CAUSES OF THE FAILURE OF INTERPRETATION.

Of all the Books of Scripture the Apocalypse has most consumed the labour of Commentators, and with the least valuable results. To this day there is no satisfactory interpretation; and though parts have been cleared, yet they have been so remote from each other, so frequently conjectural, and so little capable of throwing light on the general prophecy, that the Apocalypse has hitherto remained, in the strongest sense, debateable ground; an unfertile and undefined district, in which every new comer may set up his claim, but no one establish his possession.

Of the acquirement and vigorous understanding of many among the interpreters, there can be no doubt; but so obvious has been their failure, that at length the attempt has been looked on as exhibiting little more than a strong determination in the experimentalists, a love of tasking themselves with insuperable difficulties, something of a theological hardihood, pardonable for

its waste of time only in the honesty of its motives. With the world, the Apocalypse has, in consequence, become nearly a dead letter. The more pious, who believe in its divine inspiration, place it apart from the general study of Scripture, as a book for whose use they must wait until some happier age. The multitude, who, like Gallio, "care for none of these things," lay it by, as an old matter of dispute with which they have no concern, or forget its existence. The scoffers and half-learned taunt religious men with the acknowledgment of a "sacred document," of which the meaning cannot be ascertained after the labours of eighteen hundred years; or indulge themselves with making mirth of its strong Orientalisms and mysterious symbols. Thus, in the present state of our knowledge, the book is practically valueless; it makes no impression on the Christian world, none is so seldom quoted even in the pulpit, and the man who quoted its authority on any public question would probably be looked on as doing no very distinguished honour to his own understanding. Yet, with all this, the Christian, in the possession of the Apocalypse, holds in his hand the most distinct, complete, and wonderworking instrument of Divine knowledge that was ever communicated to earth; the clearest elucidation

of Providence, and, not less, the most convincing and vivid evidence of the truth of Christianity.

Sufficient reasons may be found for this failure of the commentators. They have in general,—and I am sure I make the observation in perfect respect for their learned and pious labours,—been too much influenced by the great names of Sir Isaac Newton and Joseph Mede. The system of almost all among the multitude of commentators whom I have consulted, has been formed on that of those distinguished men. Yet Newton's treatise was but a sketch, and apparently a hasty one, appended to his "Observations on Daniel." Mede's more diligently laboured work is yet singularly strained, obscure, and gratuitous. Both have the grand disqualification, that they wrote at a time when those events which are the absolute key of the whole prophecy, had not yet occurred. The natural result of determining, under such circumstances, to find a meaning for every part, was error; and to adopt their authority was but to propagate their error. In the arrangement of the prophetic visions, and their mutual dependance, both were wrong; and a misconception of this rank must be fatal to the formation of any true system. Yet, in an important portion of the past, the predictions immediately

relative to the rise of the popedom, their interpretation is not to be shaken; though their credit as discoverers may be impaired by the same application of the prophecy so early as the twelfth century.

Perhaps a reason remains why the sagacity of even later writers should have been still baffled. It may be the Divine will that no prophecy should receive a full explanation at a time distant from its final fulfilment. A prophecy, *convincingly* interpreted at a remote period, would be, if the phrase be allowable, a history of the future; it must interfere with human will, and thwart that most admirable part of Providential government by which general good is forced out from the individual and spontaneous waywardness of man. The predictions of the Jewish prophets were chiefly capable of immediate interpretation; but it was because their purpose was immediate, the punishment of the people for their idolatries, or the Divine retribution on the head of their oppressors. But their predictions of the distant Messiah were wrapped in a cloud which, though no longer obscured to us, was thick darkness to the multitude. It may thus be almost a maxim, that no prophecy can be accurately interpreted until it is either past, or on the point of being fulfilled.

The circumstances which led me to the task are briefly these.

Some years since, in a casual reading of the Apocalypse, I was struck with the apparent reference of the Eleventh Chapter, that of "The two witnesses," to one of the most extraordinary events of our time or any other, the abjuration of religion by a government and people! a circumstance perfectly alone in the history of the world. But I further found that this event was declared to mark the conclusion of an æra, on which the whole chronology of the Apocalypse was fixed, the well-known "Twelve hundred and sixty years," which in their turn were declared to mark the papal supremacy from the time of its commencement until the cessation of its "power over the Saints," its power of persecution.

This abjuration occurred in 1793, the first year of the French Republic; reckoning 1260 years back led to their commencement in A.D. 533. On referring to Bishop Newton's work to ascertain whether this date had been noticed; I found a note mentioning the opinion of Dr. Mann of the Charter-house, then deceased, that the year 533 was to be considered as the true epoch of the papal supremacy[8]. On reference to Baronius, the established authority among the

[8] Bp. Newton on the Prophecies, vol. ii. p. 305.

Roman Catholic annalists, I found the whole detail of Justinian's grant of supremacy to the Pope formally given [9].

Baronius has been a suspected authority, where the honour of the popedom is concerned. But his statement was, at least, proof of the Romish opinion of the original epoch of the supremacy; and it received an unanswerable support from the books of the Imperial laws, in which the grant of "primacy and precedency over all the Bishops of the Christian world," is registered, and repeated in a variety of forms. The entire transaction was of the most authentic and regular kind, and suitable to the importance of the transfer. The grant of Phocas was found to be a confused and imperfect transaction, scarcely noticed by the early writers, and, even in its fullest sense, amounting to nothing beyond a confirmation of the grant of Justinian. The chief cause of its frequent adoption as an epoch by the commentators, seemed to be its convenient coincidence with the rise of Mahometanism.

From this point I laid aside all commentators; and determined to make my way alone, to form my opinions without bias, and discover whether the difficulties of the prophecy could not be

[9] Baronii Annal. Cen. 6.

cleared off by an inquiry on the common principles of interpretation. The difficulties were less stubborn than I had conceived; and the present arrangement and interpretation were soon decided upon.

Subsequently, I read all the commentaries that I could meet with; and the crowd of writers on this subject would be scarcely suspected by those who have not made the same experiment. But, admiring their frequent ingenuity and literature, I found but little to add to my own interpretation, and nothing to alter.

Where I could make use of them in illustration or reference, they will be found in the shape of notes. My chief authority in dates and points of history has been the very diligent and exact Lardner; in both his "Credibility of the Gospel History," and his "Dissertations." In the learning of the Apocalypse, Vitringa is a voluminous guide, his research extends through almost all languages and all authorship; but like his countrymen he is overwhelmed by his literary opulence, his meaning is lost in endless and irrelevant discussion, and the severest task that I have been put to in a work proverbially intricate and laborious, has been the toil of wading through the ponderous "Implementa Prophetiæ" of Vitringa.

AUTHENTICITY OF THE APOCALYPSE.

The Apocalypse can be proved to have existed and been received as a portion of the inspired Volume in the earliest period of Christianity; it is quoted in the first writings of the Church; it became the subject of early commentary, and was fully accepted during the first three centuries, those of the clearest knowledge, and most immediate transmission of authority from the Apostles.

It appears from some passages in "The Shepherd of Hermas," a work contemporary with St. John, to have been seen by the writer.

About the middle of the second century, scarcely more than fifty years after the death of St. John, there was a persecution under Marcus Antoninus, in which Pothinus Bishop of Lyons, with many others suffered. The Churches of Lyons and Vienne sent an Epistle relating their afflictions to the Churches of Asia, a well known document, and said to have been drawn up by Irenæus. In this there are obvious references to the Scriptures and, among the rest, to the Apocalypse, "Those are they who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth[10]."

[10] Ch. xiv. 4.

Justin Martyr, still earlier (about A.D. 140,) thus writes: "A man from among us by name John, one of the Apostles of Christ, in the Revelation (Apocalypse) made to him, has prophesied, that the believers in Christ shall live a thousand years in Jerusalem, and after that shall come the general, and in a word the eternal resurrection and judgment of all together[11]."

Irenæus Bishop of Lyons (successor of Pothinus, about A.D. 178,) a disciple of Polycarp, who had been the disciple of St. John, thus writes: "We will not run the hazard of too positively affirming any thing of the name of Antichrist, for if his name were to have been declared at this time, it would have been declared by him who saw the Apocalypse. For it was seen not long ago, but almost in our own age, near the close of the reign of Domitian." Irenæus further attempts to give a solution of the mysterious number 666.

Clement of Alexandria (about A.D. 194,) writes: "Such a one, though here on earth he be not honoured with the first seat, shall sit upon the four and twenty thrones, judging the people, as John says in the Apocalypse[12]."

Tertullian (about A.D. 200,) writes: "The

[11] Dial. Tryp.

[12] Stromat. l. vi.

Apostle John in the Apocalypse describes a sharp two-edged sword proceeding out of the mouth of God [13]."

"We have Churches that are disciples of John, for though Marcian rejects the Apocalypse, the succession of bishops traced to the original will assure us that John is the author [14]."

Origen (A.D. 230,) the father of Biblical Criticism, writes "Therefore John the son of Zebedee says in the Apocalypse, 'I saw an Angel fly in the midst of heaven [15].'"

Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, (A.D. 247,) in his work against the Millennarians, treats of the Apocalypse as written by an inspired man, doubting however whether he were St. John the Apostle.

Cyprian, the Martyr, bishop of Carthage, writes, (A.D. 248,) "And in the Apocalypse the Angel resists John attempting to adore him, and says, Do it not [16]." "Hear in the Apocalypse the voice of your God [17]." Lactantius (A.D. 306,) writes: "This name, (the Son of God,) is known to no one, but himself and the Father, as John teaches in the Apocalypse [17]."

The Apocalypse was received by Arius (A.D.

[13] Adv. Marc. l. iii. c. 14.
[14] Ib. l. iv. c. 5.
[15] Com. on the Gospel of St. John.
[16] De Bon. Pudic.
[17] De Op.
[18] Epist. c. 42.

319,) and his sect; by the Donatists, (A.D. 400,) of whom one, Tichonius, wrote a commentary on it; and by the general Church.

Those authorities are undeniable; and they fully establish the fact that the Apocalypse was received in the first ages of Christianity as sacred, and forming a portion of Scripture.

I now proceed to the questions, relative to the writer, and the time of the prophecy; some of the authorities already quoted are necessarily repeated, but in another sense, and merely for the purpose of showing the original strength of the testimony.

OF THE WRITER OF THE APOCALYPSE.

It is the earliest opinion of the church that John the son of Zebedee, the writer of the Gospel, was the writer of the Apocalypse.

The arguments on this point are briefly [19],

1. No doubts were entertained of the fact in the first century, the century of his contemporaries.

2. There is no denial of it from Polycarp, Papias, Ignatius, &c.

3. The book was public from the beginning,

[19] Woodhouse's Dissertation.

was extensively quoted as a book of Scripture; and must have thus excited enquiries relative to its authorship, if there had been any doubt on the subject. It is allowed by Michaelis himself that it must have existed *at least* before the year 120, (within 23 years of the date generally received.)

4. No opinions are advanced in the Apocalypse contradictory to those found in the Gospel.

The principal opponent is Michaelis; and his argument turns chiefly upon the dissimilarity of styles, that of the Gospel being gentle, and generally, pure Greek; that of the Apocalypse being rapid, abrupt, figurative, and abounding in Hebrew idioms.

To this argument there are evident answers.

The difference of subject between a detail of the doctrines of Christianity, and the penal consequences of its rejection, might well account for a marked difference of style.

In transcribing his gospel St. John probably employed a Greek amanuensis; it was understood in the ancient Church that the Apostles employed at least occasional amanuenses [20]; that St. Paul did so, is evident from his dis-

[20] Jerome, quoted by Woodhouse, p. 122.

tinguishing certain of his Epistles as written by himself.

"Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with *mine own hand*[21]."

"I, Paul, have written it with *mine own hand*, I will repay it, (the debt of Onesimus[22].)"

It may be fairly conceived that he limited himself in his other Epistles to the "Salutation" at the end, as the sufficient mark of their authenticity. "The Salutation of Paul with *mine own hand*," which is the *token* in every Epistle[23].

"The salutation of me, Paul, with *mine own hand*[24]."

The probability is strong, that St. John, a Hebrew fisherman, (who, till about the year 68, is not known to have left Palestine,) should have availed himself of the hand of some Greek to transcribe his Gospel, a document prepared at his leisure, and which was to fill up and finish the narrative of Christianity.

But in writing the Apocalypse all this is reversed. He seems to have beheld the visions, even with the pen perpetually in his hand.

In the first vision, he receives the command; "*write* the things which thou hast seen, and the

[21] Galat. vi. 11.

[22] Philem. 19.

[23] 2 Thess. iii. 17.

[24] 1 Cor. xvi. 21.

things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter[25]."

"Unto the Angel of the Church of Ephesus *write*[26]." The same command to *write* is given with reference to all the churches. It is scarcely to be presumed, that, when *writing* was to be the instrument of conveying this most important prophecy, its use should have been deferred.

But the evidence is still more direct. "And *when* the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was *about to write*, and I heard a voice from Heaven saying unto me; Seal up these things which the seven thunders uttered, and write *them* not[27]."

Under a Revelation so immediate he must have used such language as he could; a mixture of Hebræisms and Greek, the habitual style of his countrymen, and of the Septuagint. It may be doubted, whether in the desert island of Patmos, the Apostle could have found any one capable of correcting that style; it may be much more doubted, whether he would have dared to submit to any other hand the record of those solemn impressions which he must have felt to be struck by the very stamp of Heaven.

[25] Apoc. i. 19. [26] Chap. ii. 1. [27] Chap. x. 4, 5.

"An additional argument for the identity of St. John with the writer of the Apocalypse is derivable from the use of peculiar words. The word αρνιον which occurs so frequently in the Apocalypse, (a word seldom used in the LXX.) is found nowhere else in the New Testament, except in the Gospel of St. John[28]. The form of expression ποιειν αληθειαν and ποιειν ψευδος is used Apoc. xxii. 15, and in the first Epistle of St. John, i. 6. Further, in Apoc. i. 7, there is a quotation from Zechariah xii. 10, *not* according to the text of the LXX, but with a different reading, used by St. John, when he saw Christ pierced on the cross, but quoted by no other of the sacred writers[29]."

Lardner reinforces this argument. Our Saviour says to his disciples, "be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Christian firmness under trials is several times represented by "overcoming, overcoming the world, or overcoming the wicked one," in St. John's first Epistle[30]. And it is language peculiar to St. John's writings in the New Testament. Our Lord says[31], "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also over-

[28] Chap. xxi. 15. [29] Michaelis, vol. iv. p. 535.
[30] Chap. ii. 13, 14.—iv. 4.—v. 4, 5. [31] Rev. iii. 21.

came, and am set down with my father on his throne [33]."

Further instances of similarity of phrase may be found in Mill's Proleg. No. 176, 177.—Wells —Beausobre, and L'Enfant preface sur l'Apocalypse.

The argument is still stronger where there is an identity of thought as well as of phrase. St, John in the Gospel is remarkable for habitually appealing to the evidence of the eye. "And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we *beheld his* glory [34]."

Again; when the soldier pierced our Lord's side. "And he that *saw* it bare record, and his record is true [35]."

Again; his first Epistle commences with, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have *seen with our eyes,* which we have *looked on,* and our hands have handled of the Word of Life. For the life was manifested, and we have *seen it,* and bear witness."

Again; "*This is* the disciple which testifieth of these things [36]." Nothing like this frequency and force of appeal to personal cognizance is to be found in the other sacred writers.

[33] Chap. ii. 7. 11. 17. 26.—iii. 5. 12. 21. and xxi. 7.
[34] Chap. i. 14. [35] Chap. xix. 35. [36] Gospel, xxi. 24.

But the Apocalypse bears the same characteristic on its front. It is declared to have been sent and signified to John, "Who bare record of the Word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he *saw*[37]."

An additional argument for the identity of the writers may exist in the verses at the close of the Gospel and beginning of the Apocalypse. "This is the disciple which testifieth of those things (ὁ μαρτυρων,) and wrote those things, and we know that his testimony (η μαρτυρια) is true[38]."

"He sent and signified it to his servant John, who bare record of the word of God and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things which he saw." (Ος εμαρτυρησε τον λογον του Θεου και την μαρτυριαν[39].) This expression is repeated[40], when the writer describes himself as "John, their companion in tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, in the Isle called Patmos, for (δια, on account of) the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ[41]." (Τον λογον του Θεου και την μαρτυριαν.) The identity of expression in these three passages of the original seems to imply, that the second had a direct reference to the first, and that the third

[37] Chap. i. 2. [38] John xxi. 24. [39] Apoc. i. 2.
[40] Chap. v. 9. [41] Chap. i. 9.

assigns the fact of St. John's writing the Gospel as a ground of his exile. The connexion runs thus. In the close of the Gospel, St. John declares himself to have been an eye-witness of our Lord's ministry, and to have been the writer of the history. In the commencement of the Apocalypse, he declares himself to be one who had given his evidence "to the word of God and the testimony of Jesus." A few verses further, he declares that he was banished to Patmos on account of having given this evidence to the "word of God and testimony of Jesus."

The usual way of interpreting the verse at the commencement[42] is, that the writer is merely intending to express his having given a faithful account in the Apocalypse. But this is overthrown by the 9th verse, which states, that it is in consequence of "the testimony," &c. that he has been exiled. It refers to something previous to the Apocalypse. It is true, that "the word and testimony" sometimes express merely the doctrine. But the peculiarity of their use by St. John in the very places where we should look for them, if it were his purpose to state himself the writer of both, makes the evidence

[42] Apoc. i. 2.

nearly conclusive. And there would be a value in the identification. It must have been important to the general acceptance of the Apocalypse by the early Churches, that it should be known as the work of an Apostle.

It is unnecessary to multiply discussion on this point. Yet there is one argument, which, so far as I can observe, has been altogether overlooked; and which, as it offers an explanation of a passage hitherto baffling all interpretation, and even giving rise to one of the oldest and most curious misconceptions in Christian history, may be worth proposing.

In our Lord's interview with the Apostles[43], perhaps his last, he declared to Peter that he should die a violent death. Peter turning and seeing John, the favoured disciple, enquired what death he too should die. "Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till *I come*, what is that to thee?" This has been generally taken simply as a rebuke, and such it may have in some measure been, though the enquiry may have proceeded as much from friendship as from curiosity. But the Disciples, who heard the words and saw the countenance of the Divine Speaker, evidently took it for more, for a

[43] John xxi. 18, &c

prophecy, a new miracle, by which John was to be immortal. "Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die." St. John, in writing of this many years after, does not contradict the idea of its having been a prophecy; he merely objects to the interpretation as urged too far. "Yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till *I come*, what is that to thee?" At that coming, St. John evidently understands, that he was to die.

The commentators [44] have conceived that our Lord here spoke of his "coming," at the siege of Jerusalem. But words like his are not to be taken in so loose a way; for St. John long survived that date. He wrote his Gospel nearly thirty years after the siege, without allusion to that date. But at the very time of his writing the Gospel, he was on the eve of receiving a Revelation, in which it was declared that our Lord was "coming," and that his advent was to punish and purify the Asiatic Churches by withdrawing the protection which had hitherto saved them from the pagan sword. The Apocalypse opens with the announcement of this "coming." It closes with the declaration, "Surely I come

[44] Hammond, Stanhope, Lightfoot.

quickly." The writer responds, like one who felt that it was to be the termination of life and the beginning of happiness, "Amen, even so *come*, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, Amen."

It has been supposed that the "coming" applied merely to the general fates of Christianity. But this must be wrong; for the prophecy of the future, the τα μελλοντα, is distinguished in the strongest manner, by location, circumstance, and even by the peculiar solemnity of its declaration, from that of the Asiatic Churches, to all and each of which the threat is repeated, that the Lord is *coming quickly* to *them*, and that his coming should let loose the pagan persecutor upon them. Thus, to the Church of Ephesus, he says, "Repent and do the first works, or else I will *come to thee* quickly [45]." To Pergamus, "Repent, or else I will *come to thee quickly*." And so of others. But to the Church of Philadelphia, the declaration is, that, in consequence of her purity, she shall be protected under the trial. "I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world." This proves that the persecution was to be immediate and local, as regulated by the degrees of

[45] Apoc. ii. 5.

impurity in the several Churches. It was finally to visit every Church of the Roman empire, then looked on as equivalent to the world.

And the history is conformable. The Apocalypse is stated to have been made public (about A.D. 97,) in the reign of Nerva [46]. That Emperor died in 98; and, from the accession of Trajan, the great persecution had begun in Asia Minor, one year after the publication of the prophecy. In two years from that time (A.D. 100) St. John died [47]. Thus then would be, at once, substantiated the identity of the writers of the Gospel and the Apocalypse; and would be cleared up the meaning of the mysterious passage relative to St. John's immortality.

This local prophecy is easily distinguished from the more solemn and universal advent of our Lord, declared in the first verses of the Apocalypse. The time when "every eye shall

[46] Lardner, vol. vi. p. 638.

[47] Jerome, in his book "Of Illustrious Men," says, "The Apostle John lived in Asia in the time of Trajan, and dying at a great age in the 68th year after our Lord's passion, was buried in the city of Ephesus." Supposing the crucifixion to have been in the year 32 (Jerome's opinion), 68 years will reach to the year 100, or 3d of Trajan, in which year the death of St. John is placed by Jerome in his Chronicle. Lardner, vol. vi. p. 169.

see him, and they that pierced him, and the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him," was determined for the last ages, and for an assertion of his majesty and judgement before all mankind.

THE DATE OF THE APOCALYPSE.

It was the original opinion of the Church that the Apocalypse was written before the close of the first century.

The testimony of Irenæus has been already detailed; he fixes it in the reign of Domitian[48].

Clement of Alexandria speaks of St. John's returning from Patmos to Ephesus after the death of the tyrant Domitian[49].

Victorinus (A.D. 290) says that John was banished by Domitian, and in his reign saw the Apocalypse[50].

Eusebius, in the history of Domitian's persecution, says, "In this persecution, as it is said, John, the Apostle and Evangelist, being still living, was banished into the island of Patmos, for the testimony of the word of God[51]."

Jerome, in his book of "Illustrious Men," al-

[48] Lib. v. c. 30.
[49] Euseb. H. E. l. iii. c. 23.
[50] Apud Cave.
[51] H. E. l. iii. c. 18.

ready alluded to, says, "Domitian, in the fourteenth year of his reign, raising the second persecution after Nero, John was banished to the island of Patmos, where he wrote the Revelation, which Justin Martyr and Irenæus explain, (or attest.) When Domitian had been killed, and his edicts repealed by the senate for their excessive cruelty, he returned to Ephesus, in the time of the Emperor Nerva[52]."

In his treatise against Jovinian, he repeats that "John was at once Apostle, Evangelist and Prophet. Apostle, in that he wrote letters to the Church as a master: Evangelist, in that he wrote a Gospel: and Prophet, in that he saw the Apocalypse in the island of Patmos, whither he was banished by Domitian[53]."

Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, towards the close of the second century, in a document of great importance and publicity, his "Letter," in the name of the Asiatic Bishops to Victor the Bishop of Rome, on the controversy relative to the keeping of Easter, says, "John also was buried at Ephesus, who leaned on the Lord's breast, who was a priest, bearing a plate, (or bearing a rank equivalent to that of Jewish High Priest, who wore a golden plate on his

[52] De V. H. c. 9. [53] Adv. Jov. l. i. t. 4.

forehead,) a martyr and master, fell asleep at Ephesus [54]."

Further evidence of the early opinions must be unnecessary.

But in subsequent times there have been no less than six different conjectures as to the date. Upon those I shall not dwell, because, all admitting the inspiration of the book, the differences of date can affect only the interpretation.

It has been asserted, on the authority of Epiphanius, that this book was written in the time of Claudius.

To this it is to be answered, that there is no proof of any Christian persecution in the reign of Claudius. (A.D. 41, &c.) He commanded the Jews to leave Rome; yet the command did not affect the Jews who lived out of Italy, nor the Christians; consequently, St. John's exile to Patmos cannot be referred to that time.

It is also altogether improbable, from the history of the planting of the Asiatic Churches, that they existed in the reign of Claudius, or that St. John had been then in Ephesus; for St. Paul [55] found no Apostolic Church there.

Another opinion is, that John was exiled to Patmos, and wrote the Apocalypse in the reign

[54] Euseb. H. E. l. v. c. 24. [55] Acts xix.

of Nero, and for this has been adduced the subscription to the Syriac version. "The Revelation which was made by God to John the Evangelist in the island of Patmos, whither he was banished by the Emperor Nero." This version is a part of the Philoxenian made at the beginning of the sixth century.

To this the answer is, that a subscription which might have been written by any one, however ignorant, at any time, however late, is no authority,—and that, in the titles of the Sacred Books of the Syriac version there are known errors.

The opinion of this date has been much assisted by a prejudice. Many commentators, misconceiving the prophecies addressed to the Seven Churches, and anxious to find some great event applicable to our Lord's declaration that he was "coming quickly," looked for that "coming" in the fall of Jerusalem, and, in consequence, attempted to throw back the date. Sir Isaac Newton, Bishop Newton, and Michaelis, with others of name, have adopted this error; which has been lately revived by Mr. Tilloch in a volume of considerable ingenuity. He concludes that the Apocalypse was written before the Gospels and Epistles, from certain phrases in the latter, which might seem to have

been adopted from the prophecy. The answer is plain. Similarity of subject might naturally induce similarity of phrase. The Apostles were all prophets, all acting under the same views, and all deriving a large portion of their imagery, and even of their expressions, from the ancient Scriptures.

His two principal arguments, that the Apocalypse is mentioned by name in the Epistles, and that St. Paul, in speaking of the resurrection at the *last trumpet*, alludes to the seventh trumpet of the prophecy, allow of the obvious answers, that the use of the verb αποκαλυπτω is frequent in the Septuagint, from which it may have been derived equally by both the Epistle and the prophecy; and that the use of the trumpet as a summoner in the hands of the Deity to great changes, and peculiarly to that change by which his people shall be placed in final security and glory, is familiar to the prophets.

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come that were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the Holy Mount at Jerusalem[56]."

[56] Isaiah xxvii. 13.

"The Lord God shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning, and the Lord God shall blow the trumpet.—And the Lord their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people, for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land [57]."

On the other hand, St. Peter talks of things as in some degree future, which the Apocalypse declares to have already come. "There *shall be* false teachers among you who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them.—And many *shall* follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of [58]."

His description, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up [59]," is not like that of a man who had known the detail of the Apocalypse which marks the progress of the judgment, and divides the "Great Coming," from the final consummation by a thousand years. It is fairly conceivable too, that in speaking of that day of judg-

[57] Zech. ix. 14, &c. [58] 2 Peter ii. 1, 2.
[59] 2 Peter iii. 10.

ment, of which so many doubted at the time, he would have availed himself of the authority of a prediction so powerful and distinct as the Apocalypse, if it had been in existence.

The dates of Trajan and Hadrian are given each only on the authority of a single MS.

On the whole, there is discoverable no sufficient reason to disturb the most ancient decision, that the Apocalypse was written between A.D. 95 and 97; and thus, after the fall of Jerusalem, and shortly before the persecution by Trajan.

It may seem extraordinary that a book of Scripture, sanctioned by the name of the beloved disciple, and received by the first, second, and third centuries, should have come down to us the subject of so many contradictory opinions. But it should be recollected, that the chief opposition arose from sects to which its doctrines were obnoxious; or from the absurdities of those who, in the fourth century, perverted the pure Scriptural triumph of Christianity into a sensual paradise; and, in general, from the pride of fathers and philosophers, who, embarrassed by a prophecy not to be solved but by later events, haughtily conceived that what was darkness to them must be destitute of all light to the future.

Peculiar circumstances too aided this error. The MSS. of the Apocalypse, as of a book con-

taining neither express history nor doctrine, were fewer than those of any other portion of the New Testament. The seizure and destruction of the Christian Scriptures was the habitual object of Heathen persecution. Thus, as persecution grew, the records were diminished. And again, on that sudden accession to power, under which the doctrines of Christianity were so rapidly corrupted, the whole body of the Scriptures fell year by year more into neglect. Worldly pursuits and childish and inextricable disputations led the way to the ages of ignorance. The Apocalypse, unintelligible to the time, was gradually neglected, was sometimes dropped out of the canonical lists, sometimes even declared apocryphal, and probably often totally forgotten or unknown.

Eusebius, in his settlement of the sacred canon, by his lists of

The Ομολογουμενοι—or universally acknowledged:—

The Αντιλεγομενοι—or acknowledged by some, and objected to by others:—

The Νοθοι—or spurious books:—

Places the Apocalypse in the first and the third —adding the words "if it should so appear" (ει φανειη); thus stating that the opinions of his day varied in a strong degree; but that none of them

fixed it in his fourth class—The works of heretics. The meaning of Νοθοι is scarcely more than the doubt of its having been written by the Apostle. Yet those questions can be to us but learned trifling. The only test of a prophecy is the fulfilment. If its prediction be found true, we can ask for no higher authority. Yet the Apocalypse is deficient in nothing of even the customary human evidence. There is the plainest proof that it *existed* in the first ages;—that it was received as the work of the Apostle;—and that it was received in the sense in which we now receive it, of a declaration of the sufferings and rewards of the Christian Church. Than this what more can be asked? Or what injury can be done to this clear testimony by the doubts of corrupt or ignorant controversialists [59], of furious sectaries, or of perplexed and wilful perverters of all Christianity, then going down into the night, which, from the sixth century, covered alike the literature, the freedom, and the religion of the European nations?

ARRANGEMENT OF THE INTERPRETATION.

The purpose of the Jewish prophecies was twofold; the declaration of the Messiah, and the

[59] Epiphanius; The Alogi, &c.

denunciation of the national crimes. The purpose of the Apocalypse is one; a Warning,—to the Apostolic Church against going over to idolatry in the pagan persecutions; and to the Church in all succeeding times against being seduced or terrified by the blandishments or persecutions of Popery. In its form, and its symbols, it bears a remarkable similitude to some portions of the book of Daniel; but altogether exceeds it in directness of application, and copiousness and clearness of circumstance. Daniel was worthy of the brightest period of Jewish inspiration. The Apocalypse is worthy of the comprehensiveness, the majesty, and the splendour of Christianity. They both differ remarkably from the other prophecies, in their frequent use of dates, the only mode by which prophecies of remote events can be substantiated: for they were both intended to reach to the remotest times.

They both have the scarcely inferior value of showing, that in all the complication of the history of mankind, there is a Divine plan, carried on unceasingly, counteracting human evil without infringing on human will, and finally producing the most comprehensive and elevated happiness and honour to the creation.

But there is another value of prophecy, which has been seldom observed—its value as an in-

dependent evidence of Christianity. All historic evidence must have an alloy of uncertainty; it must depend largely on documents, in themselves often uncertain, sometimes strongly disputed, and at best liable to human error. But he who has fairly satisfied his understanding by facts that a prophecy is true, is master of a conviction immediate and irresistible. On this, personal experience must give the answer. Educated a Protestant, led by early inclination to the Church, and, of course, long conversant with the received evidences of Christianity; I yet should say, if I might be allowed to allude to individual impressions, that of all evidences the most entire and intense is that which is to be felt in the study of this great Prediction. Let prophecy be but proved—the conclusion is instinctive; it must have come from God; the religion which it vindicates, the doctrines which it contains, must have come from God. The Christian world would justly lament the loss of a single line of those glorious records of its origin, the historic books of the New Testament; but if by some fatality they could perish, all their doctrines might be recovered from the burning characters of the Apocalypse, truth without a touch of mortality, the direct transmission, the living language of the Spirit of God.

In stating the arrangement of this prophecy, I shall no more than allude to those which are to be found in the commentators. The present arrangement, the interpretation, and the general system will be found widely different from those of all my predecessors. So far as can depend on original enquiry, the entire is original. The notes are already acknowledged. In the multitude of writers on this subject, it is perfectly possible that some points may have been anticipated of which I am not conscious. But, at least, with the principal writers of late years, who may be presumed to have ascertained the most important of those points, the present work will be found remarkably at variance.

For instance, the seals, trumpets, and vials, are usually conceived to be successive, and contained in each other. The present order makes them nearly contemporaneous. The Greek Church and empire; the Mahometan invasion; and the late extinction of the Germanic empire; are usually presumed to be among the principal subjects of the Apocalypse. The present interpretation excludes them all. It further differs from its predecessors in the *whole* explanation of the trumpets and vials; in the solution of the number 666; in that of the very remarkable chapter, " The Vision of the Lo-

custs;" and, as may be supposed from such essential discrepancies, in the general conception of the prophecy.

Yet, it would only embarrass the reader to find the interpretation pausing to fight its way through this variety of opinions, however untenable; all remarks on them are therefore postponed to the final part of the volume. The work proceeds as if the Apocalypse were now given for the first time; and the reader is left to form his judgment of the elucidation on its own grounds.

By following the course of the chapters, the history of the Church is necessarily given in fragments; but a connected sketch of the history is subjoined. An Appendix examines the theories of former commentators, replies to arguments, &c.

END OF THE INTRODUCTION.

INTERPRETATION

OF

THE APOCALYPSE.

THE first three chapters must be rapidly passed over. They consist chiefly of *precepts*, made necessary by the approach of that long course of suffering by which the Church was to be tried, from the time of the Apostle to the imperial acknowledgement of Christianity. They are scarcely prophetic; and their interpretation limits itself to a few verbal remarks.

THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE.

CHAPTER I.

Verse 1. The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:

2. Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

3. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

INTERPRETATION.

The titles of the books of Scripture have in some instances been added by transcribers [1]. But the present seems undisputedly the writing of St. John. The concluding words, "for the time is at hand," imply the Apostle's pen; and in addition, this title is found nearly entire in the fathers [2].

But the head line, "The Revelation of St. John the Divine," is not established. Griesbach rejects it, as wanting in some of the older MSS. The book was originally named "The Apocalypse of John." But when the doctrine of the Trinity had come into controversy, John's powerful testimony to the Divinity of the Son, the Θεου λογος, made the application of the epithet Theologus usual to both him and his distinguishing doctrine [3].

The third verse, "*Blessed* is he that readeth," &c. is one among the many encouragements to the unrestrained use of the Scriptures. "And they that *keep* the things which are written

[1] Michaelis, Introd. c. 7. [2] Euseb. H. E. l. vii. c. 25.
[3] See Euseb. H. E. l. iii. c. 24.

therein, for the *time is at hand.*"—*Keep,* in the original, (τηρεω) is not merely, to observe, but to hold in possession, to *preserve* against a peculiar effort to wrest the Christian faith from the disciples. " For, the time is at hand,"—in the natural meaning of the words, directs this part of the prophecy to St. John's contemporaries. He gives them the immediate warning, because the danger is on the heels of the prediction.

PROPHECY.

Ver. 4. John to the seven Churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;

5. And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful Witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

6. And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

7. Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

8. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

INTERPRETATION.

The seven Churches of Asia, in the days of St. John, formed the most considerable, if not the only regularly established portion of Christendom. They were under the peculiar superintendence of the Apostle. They acted with something of the union of an ecclesiastical commonwealth, they had mutual correspondence, and St. Paul desires that his Epistle addressed to one of those Churches shall be communicated to another. In Asia the Gospel chiefly flourished; and in Asia was subsequently the chief violence of pagan persecution. A *general* address to the seven congregations was virtually an address to the Christian world.

Asia in the ancient writings bore four meanings.

The third part of the globe.

Asia Minor.

Asia on this side of mount Taurus.

Proconsular Asia, extending along the Mediterranean, and bounded inland by a line from Pergamos to Caria, with mount Tmolus for its Lydian boundary. This, with perhaps some little enlargement of its limits, is the Asia of the Apocalypse[4].

[4] Sigon. de Antiq. Jure Prov. Vitring.

The announcement of the general prophecy is of the most solemn kind. It comes from the Three persons of the Godhead; the Father in his eternity, the Son in his character of King and Saviour, and the Spirit in his Omnipresence, "the [5] *seven* Spirits of God sent forth *into all the earth* [6]."

The characteristics of our Lord (ver. 5.) all have a reference to Christianity. He is "the faithful witness, (ὁ μαρτυς) the first begotten from the dead," or first fruits of the resurrection; and "the prince of the kings of the earth," the universal Sovereign of the approaching period of the purified world.

It is also declared (ver. 7,) that his coming is to be signalized by a tremendous and universal infliction, palpable to mankind as the work of heaven,—utter wrath upon the rebels to his religion, those who daily "crucify him afresh and put him to open shame;" (Heb. vi. 6.) ruin upon the whole body of impurity and idolatry.

It is among the unanswerable proofs of the Divine Nature of our Lord, that he is distinguished in the Scriptures by the same Eternity which here distinguishes the Father, "Je-

[5] Seven implies perfection. "*Unum* spiritum dicit septiformem quæ est perfectio et plenitudo." (Bede.)

[6] Apoc. v. 6.

sus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever[7]."

PROPHECY.

Ver. 9. I John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

10. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet,

11. Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven Churches which are in Asia, unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

The original is, "In Spirit," (ἐν πνευματι,) in a state of Divine vision.

PROPHECY.

Ver. 12. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

13. And in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

14. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

15. And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

[7] Heb. xiii. 8.

16. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

17. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, fear not; I am the first and the last:

18. I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

19. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are; and the things which shall be hereafter;

20. The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks; the seven stars are the angels of the seven Churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven Churches.

INTERPRETATION.

In this passage our Lord declares himself the Almighty,—"the first and the last," shows his perpetual superintendence of the Christian Church, by walking among its lights, and appears, at once, in the garb of the high priest, and in the splendour peculiar to the Deity.—"The Ancient of days, whose garment was white as snow[8].—His body like the beryl, and his eyes like lamps of fire, and his arms and feet like in colour to polished brass[9]." Expressions probably altoge-

[8] Dan. vii. 9. [9] Dan. x. 5, 6.

ther inadequate to the vision, yet the only ones within human language. This symbolic appearance is immediately explained, ("The seven stars are the seven angels," &c.) for the purpose of the appearance was immediate. Angel or messenger was the title of the chief minister, the Sheliac Zibbor, of the synagogue; from which it was transferred to the Christian congregations.

PROPHECY.

CHAPTER II.

Ver. 1. Unto the angel of the Church of Ephesus write: These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

2. I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are Apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

3. And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured and hast not fainted.

4. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

5. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

6. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.

7. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

INTERPRETATION.

Ephesus, seated in the richest part of one of the richest regions of the Roman Empire, was remarkable for its opulence, its voluptuousness, and its idolatry. The celebrated temple of Diana attracted worshippers from all the realms of Paganism. To combat evil in its source may have been among the motives of that strong interest which St. Paul felt towards this city. He resided in Ephesus two years. It was also a centre, from which opinions were to be most extensively propagated; and by his residence, "all they who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks [10]."

The history of those periods is imperfect; as might be presumed from the destruction of the Christian records during the persecutions. But it is ascertained that Christianity, violently opposed by the priests and the populace, for its repugnance to Image-worship, was constantly involved in still more serious perils by the attempts of the half-converted Jews, and philosophers,

[10] Acts xix. 10.

Egyptian and Asiatic, to mingle it with their own mysticism. Against the traditions of the Jew and the Platonic fables of the Sophist, the Apostles continually warred. But the energies of truth and reason are feeble against prejudice fortified by interest and habitual impurity. The Asiatic Churches had gradually given way. Exposure to the ready fury of the Roman sword alone stopped them in their degradation. The trial was long and terrible; it lasted for nearly three hundred years. But it was effectual. Gnosticism, the great corruptor of the faith, lost its temptation. It lingered for an obscure period in the perishing schools of the Alexandrian philosophy. But early in the sixth century it perished, and is heard of no more.

The Church of Ephesus long retained the rank attached to it by the peculiar presence of St. Paul, of Timothy, and of St. John. The Nicolaitanes, whom the text reprobates, seem to have been Gnostics, who added to their mysticism, as was the custom, personal licentiousness. The Ephesian congregation is praised for denouncing their perverted practices; but reproved for a decay in its early devotedness to the Christian cause. Finally, a promise is given, that all who adhere to the faith in the approaching persecution, shall obtain an immortal reward.

In the general fall of the Greek Empire in Asia, (A.D. 1312.) Ephesus was ruined. Its remnant is now Aiasalic, a village of fifteen cottages, containing but three Christians.

PROPHECY.

Ver. 8. And unto the angel of the Church in Smyrna write: These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

9. I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

10. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation *ten days;* be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

11. He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches: He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

INTERPRETATION.

Smyrna, now the chief commercial city of the Levant, was considered, in the time of the Apostles, the second city of Asia[11]; Ephesus holding the first rank. One of its early bishops was Polycarp, who had been the disciple of St. John.

[11] Pliny Hist. Nat. l. v. c. 29.

His successors sat in the general councils for a long period. Like Ephesus it was ruined in the Turkish invasion. Yet its admirable situation for commerce revived it, and it is now large and opulent, containing 140,000 inhabitants, of whom about 2,000 are Greek, 6,000 Armenian, 5,000 Roman Catholic, and a few Protestants.

The Apostolic Church in Smyrna seems to have been harassed by the insults of the Jews, the original persecutors, who retained their hostility, and even their power long after the fall of their city. Eusebius [12] describes them as actively hostile, even in the time of the emperor Verus.

To the Church of Smyrna it is prophesied, that it shall have persecution *ten days*. This peculiarity of date most probably alluded to the final persecution under Diocletian and his successors; which is always described by the ancient writers as "*the ten years*' persecution." The period was remote. But the whole bearing of the prophecy to the seven Churches sustains the idea, that it was applied to the entire course of that regularly established persecution which, grounded upon the law of Trajan, never altogether ceased till the fourth century, and marked the last period of its existence by

[12] Euseb. H. E. l. iv. c. 13.

ten years of massacre. This final fury fell equally upon all the Churches; for the trial to one is predicted as the trial to all. Each prophecy is obviously generalized; "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the *Churches*."

Days are in prophetic language *years*[13]. The use may have arisen from the adoption of the seven days of the creation for the model of the week of years ending with the Sabbatical year, and of the other Jewish cycles. A sufficient proof of the authority of this use is to be found in its accurate accordance with the completion of the several prophecies.

PROPHECY.

Ver. 12. And to the Angel of the Church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

13. I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

14. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the

[13] Ezekiel iv. 6; Lowth's Isaiah, chap. xx. 3; Numbers xiv. 34.

children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

15. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.

16. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

17. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

INTERPRETATION.

The city of Pergamos was celebrated for its magnificence, as the ancient capital of the line of Attalus; for its libertinism; and for its literature; the famous library of 200,000 volumes naturally rendering it the seat of philosophy, &c. It is here called the "throne of Satan," in reference alike to its vices, its false doctrines, and its cruelty to the Christians. The martyr Antipas is mentioned by Andreas Cæsariensis [14].

The "doctrine of Balaam [15]" was image worship and dissoluteness. The "two-edged sword" is the word of God [16]. "The manna," or bread of life, and the "white stone," or token of acquittal, usual in the earlier ages, are emblems of

[14] Com. in loco. [15] Numbers, chap. xxv. and xxxi. 16.
[16] Heb. iv. 12.

the immortal happiness promised to those who held the faith at the hazard of their lives.

Pergamos was the seat of a Proconsul. It flourished long, was finally overrun in the Turkish invasion, and exists as a remnant, still retaining its ancient name. The Christian population amounts to 3,000.

PROPHECY.

Ver. 18. And unto the Angel of the Church in Thyatira write; These things saith the son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;

19. I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

20. Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

21. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

22. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

23. And I will kill her children with death; and all the Churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

24. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira,

as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burthen.

25. But that which ye have already hold fast, till I come.

26. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

27. And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father,

28. And I will give him the morning star.

29. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.

INTERPRETATION.

Thyatira was a considerable city; it is mentioned [17] as the residence of Lydia, who had at Philippi received St. Paul. It still exists, in Ak-hizar, and contains 30,000 inhabitants, of whom 3,000 are Greeks. The cavil reported by Epiphanius, and repeated by Gibbon, that in St. John's time there was no Church in Thyatira, is entitled to no credit. The residence of Lydia, a woman of influence, and a zealous disciple; the prediction itself, in which we can discover no necessity for its direction to a non-existing Church, in a region abounding with great Christian communities; the general authenticity and

[17] Acts xvi. 14.

unquestionable fulfilment of the Apocalypse; the knowledge that the Gospel was spread without any marked exception throughout proconsular Asia, are enough, and much more than enough, to rebut the conjecture of a giddy and ill-informed writer, three centuries after the death of the Apostle.

"Jezebel" is a general name for idolatry and persecution. There was probably in the city some female zealot violent against Christianity. "Adultery," and similar expressions in Scripture, frequently mean less the personal crime than a revolt from the true religion. The Christian Church is distinguished as the "bride," or the "wife;" and forgetfulness of the faith is thus naturally figured by breaking the marriage vow. The "Depths of Satan" are the mystic doctrines of the heathen, connected as they were with secret ceremonies generally impure, and always opposed to the innocence and plainness of the Gospel. "The Morning Star" is a name for Christ, enlightening the darkness of the heathen world [18].

PROPHECY.

CHAPTER III.

Ver. 1. And unto the Angel of the Church in Sardis write; These things, saith he that hath the seven Spirits of

[18] Apoc. xxii. 16.

God, and the seven Stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name, that thou livest, and art dead.

2. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain; that are ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

3. Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent. If, therefore, thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief; and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

4. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.

5. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life; but I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.

6. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.

INTERPRETATION.

Sardis was the ancient seat of the Lydian Kings, and memorable as the city of Crœsus. It was, like all the leading cities of Asia, magnificent, intellectual, and profligate. It perished in the general decay of Asia Minor, and can be scarcely said to have revived in the modern Sart. A few Christians, prohibited from having a Church within the walls, some years ago built one in the adjoining plain. A small village, named Tatar-keny, has grown round it, and about forty persons attend the service.

The crime imputed to the Church of Sardis is inactivity in the preservation and diffusion of the faith. Its punishment is appropriate. It shall be taken by surprise. (Ver. 3.) "The white garment" is the bridal and festal dress, the emblem of Christian purity and happiness.

PROPHECY.

Ver. 7. And to the Angel of the Church in Philadelphia write; These things, saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth;

8. I know thy works; behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it, for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

9. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie, behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

10. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

11. Behold I come quickly. Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

12. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of Heaven from my God, and I will write upon him my new name.

13. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.

INTERPRETATION.

Philadelphia had been a flourishing city, and possessed a comparatively pure Church. Its Bishop, Melito, a man distinguished in the second century, wrote a treatise on the Apocalypse, which has perished in the general destruction of the early Christian records.

The city suffered much from earthquakes, yet was remarkable for the number of its Christian population, even subsequently to the Turkish invasion. This feature has not altogether passed away. The purity of the Apostolic doctrine may be degraded, but its form, at least, is retained by the Greeks, who have twenty-five places of regular worship, five of them large churches, with a bishop and twenty clergy. The name is now Alasheht.

"Who say of themselves that they are Jews and are not." This is probably to be explained by the expression,—"All are not Israel that are of Israel;" nominally Jews, but destitute of the spirit of the Covenant. It is declared, that they shall be humbled before the peculiar congregation of this city. An event which has been lost in the obscurity of the time.

"The New Jerusalem" is the symbolical name for that period of Christian triumph which is to close the providential system of the earth.

PROPHECY.

Ver. 14. And unto the Angel of the Church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

15. I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot.

16. So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

17. Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing: and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked:

18. I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve that thou mayest see.

19. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

20. Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

21. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcome, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

22. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.

INTERPRETATION.

Laodicea, upon the river Lycus, was an opulent city, and was, probably, betrayed by its opulence into its neglect of the sincere spirit of religion. Colossæ stood near it, and seems to have been peculiarly united with it as a Church, for St. Paul directs that his Epistles shall be interchanged[19], and speaks of them in conjunction[20].

After a long period of the usual changes of the Greek Empire in Asia, Laodicea sank, and is now a heap of ruins, with a village, Eskihisar, of fifty inhabitants near its site, among whom two Christians only could be found by a late traveller[21]. There is a small Christian congregation in the town of Denizli three miles from the ruins.

The peculiar expressions in this address are few. The "Amen," is verity and certainty. The "Beginning of the Creation," refers less to the origin of the world, than to the resurrection, by which our Lord is "the firstborn," the beginning of a new spiritual world. "Gold tried in the fire" is virtue that can withstand trial. The "throne" is the promise of glory to all who shall retain their faith in the persecution.

[19] Coloss. ii. 16.

[20] Chap. ii. 1.

[21] Lindsay's Letters.

Those chapters have been commented on but briefly, from their complete disjunction from that part of the Apocalypse which relates to the latter ages.

Their chief value now consists in their proof, that Providence is watchful, even minutely watchful, over the fortunes of Christianity; that peculiar offences are punished, and cleared away by peculiar means; and that even the violences of man are but instruments in the divine hand for good to the Church. The persecutor is a criminal, perhaps the most guilty of all offenders, but his crime is converted into the means of correction and purity to the people of God.

All attempt at that close adaptation of fact to prophecy, which is so easily effected in the subsequent chapters, must be nugatory here. The period before Constantine is precisely that one, of which the fewest records have survived. Mosheim's Tract, "De rebus Christianis ante Constantinum," while it shews more than German industry, shews how little can be obtained by research. The persecution, as has been already observed, had for a principal object the extinction of all the Christian documents. In the time of actual peril, those memorials could seldom be renewed. And, excepting some of the "Defences" of the conduct and doctrine of the

persecuted, and some passing notices of the opinions of Sectaries, we have scarcely any authentic remains of the three centuries of struggle that first wrought the Church into vigorous virtue.

But the prophecy to the Asiatic Churches does not demand much elucidation of this nature. It is chiefly unconnected with facts. Its purpose too closed with paganism. The age was not yet come, when Christianity was to form a great moving power of the system of nations. Its state was almost unvaried; and the events of Roman History during those centuries exercised no other influence upon the Church than the greater or less severity of a persecution that never wholly died. What was it to Christianity whether the lash was brandished by a Cæsar, or an Usurper, when the stripes were the same from all? The only references made in such a prophecy would probably be to some extension of the sphere of suffering, or to some more remarkable period of its violence. And such are made. It is declared, that the persecution shall spread to all the congregations of the empire. The hour of temptation[22] is predicted, "which shall come upon *all the world*, to *try* them that *dwell upon the earth*[23]." It is also predicted, that there

[22] Temptation, (πειρασμος,) trial of faith by persecution.

[23] Apoc. iii. 10.

shall be a peculiar epoch of suffering. "Ye shall have tribulation *ten days:* be thou faithful unto death[24]."

Both had their completion.

The persecution did actually spread through all the congregations of Christianity in the Roman Empire.

There was a remarkable epoch; the attempt at the extirpation of the Christians under Diocletian and Galerius, continuing during *ten* years, from A.D. 303. to 313; a period pre-eminently marked by the Church Historians as the "ten years' persecution."

Thus, the beginning, the extent, and the only signal variation in the ages of pagan persecution, the increase from partial infliction to general, and from qualified severity to massacre, are marked by the prophecy. There is scarcely a ground for particularity of a higher degree in any prediction of the centuries between Trajan and Constantine. Yet, it is left to the reader, whether he will consider this prediction as stretching through the whole period. The only point, which it is of importance to prove, is that St. John here writes of the beginning of the trial under Trajan, and that the expression of "*coming quickly*" refers to that beginning.

[24] Apoc. ii. 10.

THE

ΤΑ ΜΕΛΛΟΝΤΑ,

OR

FUTURE.

THE Apocalypse is henceforth a *fasciculus* of predictions, explaining each other by their parallelism. The same events are frequently repeated, as in the prophecies of the Old Testament; but under different points of view. Apparently for the purpose of introducing order into those involvements and repetitions; three regular series of periods are given:—the Seals, the Trumpets, and the Vials. The first two immediately in the commencement of this portion of the prophecy; the third at a certain distance, being preceded by some chapters necessary to its elucidation. In the following table a general view of the three series is given. The Seals commence with the close of the great Persecution in the fourth century, and comprehend the whole course of Providence down to the consummation of all things. The Trumpets and Vials commence with the close of the great Persecution in the thirteenth century, are contemporaneous, and typify the punishments visited on the chief persecutors of the Reformed.

TABLE

OF THE

SEALS, TRUMPETS, AND VIALS.

THE SEALS.	THE TRUMPETS.	THE VIALS.
1. The establishment of Christianity.		
2. The fall of the Western Empire.		
3. The Papacy,		
comprehending	1. The Papal and French wars of the fourteenth century.	1. The plague of the fourteenth century.
	2. The destruction of the Spanish Armada.	2. The destruction of the Spanish Armada.
	3. The war of the Cevennes.	3. The war of the Cevennes.
	4. The wars of Louis XIV.	4. The wars of Louis XIV.
4. The French Revolution.	5. The French Revolution.	5. The seizure of Rome in the French Revolution.
5. An interval.	6. The overthrow of the Revolution.	6. The overthrow of the Revolution.
6. The universal war.	7. The universal war.	7. The universal war,
7. The triumph of the Church.		

THE PROPHECY OF THE SEALS.

CHAPTER IV.

Verse 1. After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

2. And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

3. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

4. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

5. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

6. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

7. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.

8. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest

not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

9. And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,

10. The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

11. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

INTERPRETATION.

The purpose of this chapter and the following is to authenticate the connexion of the Jewish and Christian dispensations. The Deity, the God of Israel, as he appeared to Isaiah[25] and Ezekiel[26], is seen combined with the Christian Saviour, and the Holy Spirit, in the developement of the Seals, a course of Providence, relative to the Christian Church.

His splendour is imaged by precious stones, a habitual emblem of all that is most magnificent and luminous. The "rainbow" is probably expressive of the Divine mercy exercised in the act of covenant and protection.

[25] Chap. vi. [26] Chap. i.

The "Beasts" (Ζωα) should be translated "living beings," or, perhaps, from the frequent Scriptural contrast between animal life and the life of the soul, (Ψυχη and Ζωη) "Immortalities." They resemble the Cherubim and Seraphim of Isaiah and Ezekiel; and under the shapes of the lion, the bull, the man, and the eagle, are emblematic of the supremacy, strength, wisdom, and rapidity of Providence. The "Glassy sea," a natural and usual image of tranquillity, signifies the perfect peace of the Church when it shall stand in the presence of God. The "Four and twenty Elders," like the four and twenty priests of the courses appointed, two for each tribe, to offer up the sacrifices and supplications of the Jewish people [*26], are the representatives of the Christian priesthood.

A great deal of learned labour has been unproductively expended on the attempt to assign the precise values of those emblems. Such exactness may be beyond us, or, more probably, is unnecessary. It is enough to look to their general purport, of showing that the old dispensation and the new are spiritually the same; that the true believer among the ancient people of God was but the ancestor of the true believer

[*26] 1 Chron. xxiv.

among the disciples of the Gospel. The Cherubim, the Elders, the Sea of Glass, &c. are those of the temple.

PROPHECY.

CHAPTER V.

Verse 1. And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.

2. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

3. And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

4. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

5. And one of the elders said unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

6. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

7. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

8. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb,

having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

9. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

10. And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

11. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

12. Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

13. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

14. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever.

INTERPRETATION.

In this chapter the divine nature of our Lord is distinctly displayed. He is in the *midst* of the throne; not as the cherubim, in the midst and *round* the throne, nor as the elders, only round it; the Saviour is in intimate union with

the Father. The throne is subsequently called "the throne of God and the Lamb[27]." He is also in intimate union with the holy Spirit. He is the Lamb, having "seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God." "Horns" are a customary Scripture expression of majesty and power. The number seven implies perfection. The Saviour is thus Omnipotence and Omniscience—GOD!

The connexion of the Jewish and Christian dispensations is sustained, as in the previous chapter. Christ is at once the "Lion of the tribe of Juda," and "the Lamb that was slain:" the Jewish conqueror, and the Christian sacrifice.

The Book with Seven Seals is the prophecy of the whole course of Christianity, from the time of its imperial establishment to the end of the world. It is apparently alluded to by Daniel, who, at the close of his visions, is commanded to "shut up the words, and *seal* the book, even to the time of the end," the close of the Jewish dispensation[28].

The Apostle's extreme solicitude and tears express the unequalled importance of the prophecy of the Seven Seals. The impossibility

[27] Chap. xxii. 1. [28] Daniel xii. 4.

of its being opened by any created being; and its being subsequently opened by our Lord, imply, at once, that it contains counsels beyond all human wisdom,—that those counsels relate to Christianity,—and that the distinction between our Lord and all created existences is total.

"The Elders," in their capacity of representatives of the priesthood, offer up the prayers and praises of the Church. They alone have the harps and vessels of incense, (εχοντες εκαστος κιθαρας, which excludes the Ζωα.) Their hymn is, the hymn of the people of God on earth; offered through the elders, as the supplications of public worship are made through its appointed ministers.

The general acclamation of the angels and the universe is an expression of the boundless homage and gratitude that ought to fill the heart for the sacrifice of Christ, and the wisdom and grandeur of Christianity.

CHAPTER VI.

In this chapter the Seals commence. They constitute the chief prophecy of the Apocalypse. The subsequent predictions, the Trumpets, Vials, &c., all refer to portions of this leading series. It is distinguished from them all by the peculiar majesty of its announcement in the presence of the Eternal Father, Son, and Spirit;

of the representative priesthood in Heaven of the Church on earth; of the multitude of the Heavenly Host; and of the whole universe, uttering one voice of wonder and thanksgiving. The remaining predictions are either announced by subordinate spirits, or are solitary visions, seen in the desert or on the shore. There is no other mention of the Trinity, but in the Benediction in the opening of the book[29], declaring the general purport of the Apocalypse. The Seals repeat that purport, but with more distinct splendour, and on a more expanded scale.

Yet, it is to be observed, that their descriptions are extremely brief. They give scarcely more than a single feature of each period. Their interpretation must consequently be brief and general. The subsequent chapters go into the details. The principal value of the Seals is that of an index map, by which the relative positions of the subsequent charts are to be arranged; a kind of chronological table, reducing to order the mingled and episodical narratives of the succeeding history. In the interpretation of the Seals, I shall not contend for minute points; the more important object is the truth of the Outline.

[29] Chap. i. 4, &c.

The form adopted in the "Interpretation" is that which appears calculated to shew the connexion of the text and the comment, in the least involved manner. The text is first explained as to its verbal meanings. An express summing up of the bearings of the passage is then given, where necessary. This is followed by a concise statement of the facts. The "History of the Decline and Fall" will be the chief source of reference, from its being the most accurate in chronology and research, and also from its supplying a testimony, which Gibbon's unhappy prejudices render unimpeachable, where Christianity is the subject of his praise.

THE FIRST SEAL.

THE PROPHECY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CHRISTIANITY.

CHAPTER VI.

Verse 1. And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the Seals; and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts, saying, Come and see.

2. And I saw, and behold a *white* horse: and he that sat on him had a *bow;* and a *crown* was given unto him: and he went forth *conquering*, and *to conquer*.

INTERPRETATION.

In the visions of Zechariah[30], a succession of

[30] Chap. i. and vi.

angelic shapes come forth mounted on horses, red, black, white, and black and white; emblematic of the course of events, by which Israel and its enemies should be alternately sustained or punished. The same emblem reappears in the Seals. The "horse," the animal chiefly used in war, refers to changes influenced by military power. The several colours are obviously emblematic. "White" was the colour of victory; and white horses drew the Roman triumphal chariot. The emblem is repeated in the victorious coming of the Redeemer [31].

The "Bow," peculiarly the oriental weapon, refers the triumph in this Seal to some Eastern agency.

The "Crown" implies acknowledged supremacy.

The rider on the horse represents *not* an individual, but an æra.

By a sovereignty, warlike, and seated in the East, Christianity shall be made the sovereign religion. It shall finally conquer heathenism; and thenceforth shall be the declared Religion of Europe for ever.

[31] Chap. xix. 11.

HISTORY.

From the close of the first century to the year 313, Christianity had been in a state of persecution, partially intermitted by the policy or humanity of a few of the Roman emperors, but capriciously recurring with a degree of violence which made even the time of its cessation, still deeply anxious and miserable; by the death of Galerius and the military superiority of Constantine in 313, the persecution ceased. But Licinius was still a competitor, and it was only by his defeat that Constantine obtained the final sovereignty. He had already determined to remove the seat of empire to the east, and he now commenced the building of Constantinople.

A.D. 324. His first act of government was the despatch of an edict throughout the empire exhorting his subjects to embrace Christianity. In about six years after, Constantinople was dedicated, and became the seat of the imperial government.

Christianity had yet but begun its triumph. It was still retarded by the popular prejudices; and was even utterly suspended during the reign of Julian; but the suspension was short; for, on the death of this emperor, twenty months from his accession, it was re-established, and conti-

nued to spread, until it saw the heathen altars extinguished by the emperor Theodosius in 390. A ruin which Gibbon [32] pronounces, "perhaps the *only example* of the total extirpation of any ancient and popular superstition."

THE SECOND SEAL.

THE PROPHECY OF THE FALL OF THE WESTERN EMPIRE.

Ver. 3. And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see.

4. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

INTERPRETATION.

In the first seal, the first of the Ζωα, or existences before the throne, a lion, the emblem of Christ, (the lion of the tribe of Juda,) summoned the Apostle; for the subject was the triumph of Christianity. The summoner of the second seal is the Μοσχος, which should have been translated the Bull; the emblem at once of strength and sacrifice. The fire colour (πυρρος) of the horse; the falchion, and the declaration against the peace of the earth; equally imply extensive ravage by armies.

[32] Chap. xxviii.

The empire shall be visited by an extraordinary course of desolation inflicted by the sword.

HISTORY.

A.D. 395. On the death of Theodosius the empire was divided between his sons; Arcadius retaining the east, and Honorius the west.

In the winter of the same year the Goths revolted, and Alaric invaded the western empire. From this time the barbarians were never expelled; a succession of new invasions by new devastators at length crushed the western empire.

A.D. 476. Augustulus the last emperor of the west resigned to Odoacer, and after unparalleled havoc and misery the empire was at an end.

THE THIRD SEAL.

THE PROPHECY OF THE POPEDOM.

Ver. 5. And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

6. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

INTERPRETATION.

The "living creature" that summons the

Apostle to the contemplation of this seal is in the "likeness of a man," the emblem of sagacity; and it accordingly announces the rise of an influence sustained, not by the sword, but by the instrumentality of the mind.

This characteristic marked the growth of the papal power. By the exercise of superior subtlety and also of superior knowledge, it rose above the barbarian sovereignties of the time. The distinction had been already predicted by Daniel. "Behold, in this horn, (the papal sovereignty,) were *eyes* like the eyes of *man*[33]."

"The black horse," the colour of night, is, by metaphor, that of ignorance.

"The pair of balances," in the original is a "yoke," Ζευγος or Ζυγος.—"Instrumentum quale jumentorum cervicibus impositum," metaphorically a system of severe or positive ordinances; a law of ceremonies and privations. (Schleusner.) The express word "yoke" was used by some of the early writers with reference to religious prohibitions, similar to those of popery; Παρθενιας ζυγον μηδενι επιτιθει, "lay upon none the yoke of celibacy." The ceremonies, &c. introduced in the fifth century were spoken of as a *yoke*, "jugum," more severe than that of the

[33] Daniel vii. 8. 20.

Jewish law [34]. This seal is distinguished by its being accompanied by the "voice from the midst of the four beasts," the voice of Deity; which marks the prediction as either intrinsically more important, or more directly affecting that persecuted church which is under the peculiar protection of heaven.

"A measure of wheat for a penny." This *penny* is the denarius, or sevenpence. The *measure* is the chœnix, or eighth part of a bushel. The price implies a *great* scarcity; for the ordinary value of the bushel was but a denarius [35].

Wheat, barley, wine, and oil, are proverbially the most valuable produce of the earth; and in the description of the opulent fertility of the promised land, they are generally combined. Canaan is declared by Moses, "a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey [36]." Solomon, in his day of glory, gives the builders of the temple, "of that house," which was to be "wonderful great," twenty thousand measures of wheat, and barley, and wine, and oil [37].

Yet in their values in this place an evident

[34] Augustin. Ep. 19. Socrat. Hist. lib. xi. Woodhouse.

[35] Cicer. in Verr. Maxima annonæ gravitas significatur. Schleusner.

[36] Deut. viii. 8.

[37] 2 Chron. ii. 10.

distinction is intended. The wheat is three times the price of the barley; and the wine and oil seem, by the prohibition against their being hurt, to be the objects of superior injury. But, in the New Testament, wheat is constantly the emblem of the people of God. "In the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the *wheat* into my barn[38]." The barley, an inferior grain, implies men of an inferior degree of Christian knowledge; the wine and oil, more costly than either, the more conspicuous communities or individuals of Christianity.

There shall be a period of ignorance. It shall be marked by the imposition of a system of ceremonies and oppressive observances. It shall be introduced by military means; but it shall be sustained and aggrandized by mental. During its influence, the holders of the faith in purity shall be few. But there shall be a crowd of sectaries, approaching in various degrees to the true standard. Of the church the most distinguished portions, or individuals, shall be exposed to persecution.

[38] Matt. xiii. 30.

HISTORY.

A.D. 533. The Papacy, after successive efforts to obtain spiritual supremacy, was placed in possession of it by the edict of Justinian, declaring the Pope "universal bishop, and head of all the Churches of the east and west," and further ordaining that "all matters, relative to the Church, should be referred to Rome."

In this century, "the western Churches were *loaded* with rites by Gregory the great." —"He prescribed a new method of administering the Lord's Supper with a magnificent assemblage of pompous ceremonies." This Institution of his was called "The Canon of the Mass[39]."

In the 7th century, the rites increased, and homage was paid to the remains of the "true cross," to the images of the Saints and to bones[40]. Celibacy was next made the law of the clergy, fastings and other severities were enacted, and the religion of Rome was formed into a code of showy, laborious, and superstitious observances.

In the 11th century, with the commencement of the reformation in Piemont and the south of France, a great variety of sects started up, some closely approaching the purity of the Gospel,

[39] Mosheim, Cen. vi.

[40] Ibid. Cen. vii.

and others deviating widely from it, even into extravagance and fanaticism, under the names of Catharists, Petrobrussians, Beghards, Arnaldists, Henricians, &c. &c. yet all partaking of the truth; for all acknowledged the Bible as the standard of faith; and nearly all, when the first wildness of sudden religious freedom had subsided, gradually purified their practices and opinions into sound Christianity.

In the 12th century, Persecution, always existing, was established with memorable violence by the Popedom against the Reformers.

In the 13th, the Inquisition was invested with power; and thenceforward the most exemplary, learned, and pure, among the Reformed, were hunted down by this tribunal, and by the other agents of Papal persecution in France, Germany, Italy, Spain, &c.

THE FOURTH SEAL.

THE PROPHECY OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

Ver. 7. And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.

8. And I looked, and behold a *pale* horse: and his name that sat on him was *Death*, and *Hell* followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

INTERPRETATION.

The summoner in this instance is the *Eagle;* the emblem of rapidity and fierceness of execution; the favourite standard of conquest and rapine, even in our own day.

The *pale* horse (χλωρος) is of the *livid* colour of corruption.

"Death" is used in Scripture for the extinction of the moral principle, the absence of spiritual life. ("Dead in trespasses and sins.") Christ is declared to come as "the day-spring" to give light to those who sat in "the shadow of *death*[41]."

"Hell" is the emblem of hostility to God. The Scribes and Pharisees, in perverting the Jews, are said to be making them the children of *hell*[42].

"The *fourth* part of the earth." This expression is remarkable, as the only instance of such a division in the Apocalypse.

To kill with "the sword, and death (disease)" &c. implies an extraordinary loss of life, arising from war and its consequent famines, contagions, and that wasting of the human race which leaves the land to the ravage of wild beasts, &c.

There shall be a period of havoc, arising from total moral corruption. The doctrines of the

[41] Luke i. 79. [42] Matt. xxiii. 15.

immortality of the soul, and a God, shall be abrogated; *death* and *hell* shall be the creed and the impulse of the time. The war shall extend over one *quarter* of the globe. Great slaughter in the field shall be accompanied by various and extensive misery and desolation.

HISTORY.

A.D. 1789. The French Revolution began. It was excited and sustained by the singular corruption of Church, court, and people.

A.D. 1793. The Republic began. It declared that death was an eternal sleep; that Christianity was an imposture; and that there was no God!

In the same year it became military, raised the nation in arms by the *Levee en Masse*, and declared hostilities against Europe. Its civil and foreign wars, under both, the Republican and Imperial governments, were marked by slaughter exceeding all within memory; and still more marked by the misery which they inflicted on Europe, in the shape of tyranny and insult, the waste of private happiness, and the sacrifice of the materials of renovation.

THE FIFTH SEAL.

The political changes, designated by the riders and horses, or the intervention of human force, are now finished. The events of the world are rapidly closing, and Providence becomes its own Agent. The punishment of the oppressors of the Church, and the final peace and triumph of Christianity, are now the unmixed purposes of Providence. The French Revolution, the quintessence of moral turpitude and furious cruelty, had given proof of the natural consequences of a corrupt religion,—rebellion and infidelity. A general retribution visited on the crimes of the world; and a plain and universal vindication of the wisdom and justice of the Deity; are henceforth the subjects of the Seals.

PROPHECY.

Ver. 9. And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

10. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

11. And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

INTERPRETATION.

The altar is the "Brazen Altar[43]" on which the sacrifices of the Temple were offered. The spirits are still gathered round the spot where they were slain; indicating that the depression of the Church has yet undergone no signal change.

Their cry to God, the Δεσποτης or Supreme Ruler, implies that the measure of this depression is nearly complete, and that Providence is now about to take up the cause of its people. This demand of a thing to be done is not an unusual mode in prophecy of expressing the Divine Will, that it shall be done.

It is not improbable that some decided interposition of Providence may be prefigured by this Seal, some actual persecution checked, and some considerable accession to the Church effected. One purpose of the Seal, at least, is to declare that there shall be an interval, though comparatively brief, for the preparation of the Church against the Christian trial and civil overthrow which are to follow in the next Seal. The interval seems to be given, for the distribution of the Scriptures and the awakened zeal of Christianity to take

[43] Altare autem Holocausti hic intelligendum esse patet, quia absolute dicitur θυσιαστηριον, cum altare *sancti* passim vel aureum, vel suffituum dicatur. Vitring.

their effect, and call into the Church those who are to be saved.

The "slain" represent the whole multitude of the faithful departed; vast numbers having actually died by persecution; and the rest having been ready to lay down their lives for the faith.

The Fourth Seal closed the 1260 years, the prophetic period of the depression of the Church. The spirits of the saints, in strong expectancy, now cry out for their promised triumph. But they are told, that it shall not be yet; though the delay shall be but for "*a little season.*" Christian blood is to be shed;—and then comes the consummation.

THE SIXTH SEAL.

THE PROPHECY OF THE UNIVERSAL WAR.

12. And I beheld when he had opened the sixth Seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;

13. And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

14. And the Heaven departed as a scrowl when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

15. And the Kings of the earth, and the great men,

and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond man, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

16. And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

17. For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

INTERPRETATION.

This Seal predicts a tremendous and final affliction of the earth; in which the visible power of Heaven will overthrow, at least, the guiltier portion of the present state of things in policy, national dominion, and religion.

The obscuration of the sun, moon, and stars, Scripture emblems of the governing powers; the earthquake; the disappearance of mountains and islands; all applied by a customary and easy figure to great political changes, predict a general summoning of the powers of destruction. This fearful prediction is repeated four times in the parallel chapters[44], and the fall of the papal power forms one of its most express subjects. But the destruction goes beyond that fall; sweeps the whole extent of the earth, and smites, root and branch, all the false religions. On referring to the passages predicting the ruin of Je-

[44] Chap. xi. 15. xiv. 20. xvi. 17. xix. 19.

rusalem[45], of Egypt[46], and of Babylon[47], the same images will be found, yet, in each instance, and peculiarly in that of Jerusalem, there will be discovered a reference to some destruction more complete, terrible and universal.

Our Lord's prediction of the fall of the Jewish polity and nation employs a force of language not to be accounted for even by the unequalled calamities of the Jews, except it were intended as the type of some infliction adequate to the crimes or the purification of a world. And that it was thus typical is substantiated by the almost verbal repetition of our Lord's prophecy in this Seal.

In this period the papacy shall be extinguished, popery shall cease to be a religion, infidelity shall be crushed, the various and debasing forms of barbarian worship shall dishonour God, and disgrace human reason no more. Pure Christianity shall be fixed on that splendid eminence on which it is never to be clouded by the impurity or violence of Man. We may not yet know in what form, whether of religious persecution, military ambition, or infidel ferocity this trial is to begin; it may be in a combination of them all[48]. But the catastrophe is not dis-

[45] Matt. xx. 4.

[46] Ezekiel xxx. 2. xxxii. 7, 8.

[47] Isaiah xiii.

[48] Chap. xvi. 13.

tant, and when it comes, it will leave no future earthly vengeance for the power and justice of Heaven.

THE PROPHECY OF THE COMPLETION OF THE CHURCH.

CHAPTER VII.

Verse 1. And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the winds should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

2. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,

3. Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

4. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

5. Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.

6. Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nepthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand.

7. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand.

8. Of the tribe of Zebulun were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

INTERPRETATION.

In the previous chapter, a divine infliction was predicted to fall upon all nations. The Church might, therefore, have been presumed to undergo the common ruin. But the present chapter intervenes, to show that the protection of the Church is provided for by the Deity; four great agents, four great Monarchies, are appointed to keep Europe in peace, until the propagation of the Scriptures shall have produced its effect, and the due number required to complete the Church shall have been called from the spurious religions of Rome and the Barbarian countries. Are we not under this superintendance, this restraint from general convulsion, for this purpose, at this hour?

How the final security of the Church is to be accomplished, must be for a while even beyond conception. There are intimations in the New Testament [50] of an extraordinary interposition, of which the solitary examples of Enoch and Elijah in the antediluvian and Jewish ages may have been intended as the types; the mode of their deliverance being extended to the multitude of the Church on earth.

The four angels, standing on the *four corners* of the earth, imply an influence exerted in all regions of the world [51].

[50] 1 Thessalonians iv. 7.

[51] Isaiah xi. 12. Ezek. vii. 2. Mark xiii. 27.

The Angel from the *East* is an angel of protection; the East being the original place of the Church. The *Seal* of the living God is Conversion, the mark by which his people are to be distinguished in the general catastrophe [52]. The same symbol occurs in Ezekiel, where, previously to the capture of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, the prophet sees an angel sealing those who were to be preserved [53].

The 144,000 are the Christian Church. The same expression is used in the 14th chapter, where this meaning can be proved on other and more direct grounds. The mention of Israel does not necessarily imply the Jews. The Christians, the successors of those to whom the promises were given, are called the "Israel of God [54]," even to the exclusion of the Jews. The Christians are possessed in the New Testament of the forfeited appellatives that originally belonged to the Jews alone—"the holy nation;" "the chosen people;" "the temple of the living God." Besides, independently of the non-existence of ten of the tribes for ages before the Apocalypse, the list here given is not that of the

[52] Ideo rei ponis signum, ne res, cum aliis confusa, a te non potest agnosci. Augustin. in Joh. vi.

[53] Ezek. xi.

[54] Gal. vi. 16. Phil. iii. 5, &c.

Jews. Dan and Ephraim, the idolatrous tribes, are rejected for Levi and Joseph; the Christian Church, the declared enlargement, and remoulding of the Jewish, bearing an especial reference to the extinction of idolatry.

The number 144,000, the square of twelve, the number of the Apostles, implies a complete body or regulated church, raised upon the foundation of the Gospel [55]. The *square* was a customary sign of perfection.

THE PROPHECY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD IN CHRIST.

Ver. 9. After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

10. And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

11. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

12. Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

13. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me,

[55] Apoc. xxi. 10, &c.

What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

14. And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

16. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

17. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

INTERPRETATION.

The whole countless multitude of those who have died in the pure faith from the beginning, are now summoned to receive their reward. Those are they who in the Fifth Seal were seen waiting for their triumph, and to whom white robes were given.

The distinction between the living Church, whose calling and completion have been already stated; and this risen multitude, is obvious. The former is capable of being numbered, and is symbolised by 144,000,—the latter is numberless. The former is sealed,—the latter is not; it being by the grave separated from the immediate un-

holiness of the earth. The former does not yet wear the white robe, its spiritual triumph not being yet begun,—the latter has washed away its last stain of earth, and is ready to enter into its glory. This coincides with the order of St. Paul, who predicts that "the dead in Christ shall rise first." The previous summoning of the living church in this chapter was merely with a view to the general visitation of the world, in which the Church was still to have its share of trial, yet still to be secure.

This resurrection is, for the obvious purpose of impressing the mind still more powerfully, observed upon by one of the Elders, who interprets it to be the general assemblage of those who had preserved their faith in the Great Tribulation, that long course of suffering which has marked the Church under the dominion of both paganism and the false church from the beginning. Their happiness is represented by all that language can express of perfection. They are no more to feel human infirmity; no more to be sufferers by the injuries of man or nature; no more to be afflicted by those common anxieties to which man is born; they are to weep no more; but are to drink of the fountains of immortality, under the guidance of their God.

THE SEVENTH SEAL.

THE PROPHECY OF THE TRIUMPHANT PEACE OF THE CHURCH.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ver. 1. And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

This is the Sabbath, the day of rest of the Church. The purport of this Seal had been anticipated in the preceding description of the happiness of the redeemed entering into peace. The only expression that could be added is given in this continued "silence [56]," the emblem of the utterly undisturbed tranquillity in which Providence preserves the kingdom of its saints. Persecution is at an end; no change menaces their glorious Sabbath; they are enthroned in the paradise of the Redeemer. Thus closes this magnificent outline of the providence of God. Its filling up is to be found in the succeeding pro-

[56] Crediderim tamen *silentii* vocem hic potius, quam ullam aliam a propheta esse adhibitam; quia illa notio aptior fuit ad statum ecclesiæ *septimi* temporis depingendam quam ulla alia. Nunc itaque tandem, postquam Deus vindictam sumpsisset de hostibus Ecclesiæ, *silentium*, quies, pax, serenitas, continuas has turbationes et motus exciperet. Vitring.

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phecies, all of which are but repetitions and enlargements of the Seals, and all subsidiary in point of comprehensiveness, as well as grandeur of announcement. No following prediction is, like this, developed in the presence of the three persons of the Godhead; none unfolded by our Lord as the express Saviour; none whose opening agitates the mind of heaven and earth, and whose discoveries are succeeded by the universal Hosanna, the shout of joy from all nature, the holy homage of the redeemed, the burning adoration of the thousands and ten thousands of the host of Heaven.

THE PROPHECY OF THE TRUMPETS AND THE VIALS.

This is altogether a new course of prediction.

The consummation of the grand general plan of Providence having been shewn in the Sabbath of the seventh Seal; symbolized by a period which, though brief in itself, amounts to a long duration, compared with the undelayed succession of the other seals; St. John now beholds *enlarged* that part of the previous prophecy, which to the Reformed Church is of the most important nature, and connected with it in the closest degree.

The first verse of the 8th chapter, should be transferred to the close of the preceding; thus completing the chapters of the Seals.

It will be found that the Trumpets and Vials are nearly identical and synchronical; having little more than the distinction, that where the event predicted is principally of a political nature, its chief description is given under the Trumpets; where it is more directly ecclesiastical, it is expanded under the Vials. And those emblems are respectively suited to such purposes; the Trumpet, the instrument of war and state;

the Vial[1], or vase, the instrument of the temple-worship, sacrifice, libation, &c.

A reason may be assigned, why those two series of similar predictions should be given. Political events strike the eye, and are matters of familiar knowledge; their unbroken series is therefore valuable as evidence. But events relating to the Church, being the chief objects of the whole prophecy, also require detail. The mixture of both in this extended form might produce serious confusion, and therefore they are separated. In the great prophecy of the Seals, the political and ecclesiastical views are, it is true, conjoined; but the predictions are remarkably succinct; there is no confusion, because there is no detail.

Against the repetitions of the Apocalypse in general, no objection lies.—It is the constant custom of the Hebrew prophets to repeat their predictions. Isaiah is perpetual parallelism. Daniel repeats the visions of the monarchies; and such parallelism seems to have been expressly intended, as the chief instrument of interpretation.

In the present instance the two series are

[1] Φιαλη, used in anointing. 1 Sam. x. 1. The patera used in the temple. See the phrases, "the cup of wrath;" of trembling, &c.

placed together, and the interpretation is deduced from both, as one.

THE PROPHECY OF THE TRUMPETS.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ver. 2. And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.

3. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

4. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

5. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

6. And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

INTERPRETATION.

These verses are introductory. It will subsequently be ascertained, that the Trumpets and Vials begin *after* the date of the Inquisition. They contain the punishments inflicted on the nations who by means of the Inquisition, in the

first instance, and by general tyranny afterwards, persecuted the Church. The prediction reaches to the final overthrow of popery.

To signify that the plagues of the seven Angels are in retribution of the injuries done to the people of God; an Angel, mingling their complaints and prayers with incense, offers them on the golden altar, which, in the earthly Temple, stood before the Mercy-seat, or place of the Divine Glory; an altar, on which, by the law of Moses, no offering was to be made but of the purest kind [2], and no strange fire was to be laid. The prayers and the incense are accepted, "they rise before God;" and his answer is symbolized in the filling of the censer with fire from the same altar, and the casting of the fire into the earth, the token of the divine wrath.

To this the introduction of the chapter of the Vials corresponds.

THE PROPHECY OF THE VIALS.

CHAPTER XV.

Ver. 1. And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

[2] Exod. xxx. 9, &c.

2. And I saw as it were a *sea of glass* mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the *beast*, and over his *image*, and over his mark, and over the *number of his name*, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

3. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou *King of Saints*.

4. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

5. And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:

6. And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

7. And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

8. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

CHAPTER XVI.

Ver. 1. And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

INTERPRETATION.

It may be inquired, why the series of the Vials should be placed so remote from the Trumpets in the original. The sufficient reason is that, in alluding to the Church, "who had gotten the victory over the Beast, and his Image, and his Mark, and the number of his Name," an explanation of those terms is rendered necessary; but their explanation is to be found only in the "Vision of the Church," which occupies the 13th 14th and 15th chapters. The chapter of the Vials then follows, without an interval.

The use of those terms fixes the epoch of the Vials. The Image of the beast, and the Number of his name, did not exist before the Inquisition; of this the proof will be given in the interpretation of the 13th chapter.

The Vials being evidently scarcely more than a repetition of the Trumpets, the æra of both is the same; both are subsequent to the beginning of the thirteenth century.

The Introduction of the vision clearly applies it to the Church, which is seen standing on a "sea of glass mingled with fire," or, in a state of mingled success and suffering. The people of the faith exult in God, their peculiar King, the

King of Saints; and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, the hymn of deliverance and gratitude, of Israel freed from Pharaoh, and of the redeemed of the Lord.

The angels, appointed to "manifest the judgments of God," by punishing the persecutors, now come forth. They are in the garb of Christ, the priest of his people[3]. The temple is filled with the smoke of the divine wrath[4], for judgments are to be done, with which no man can intervene. One of the "living creatures," the special emblems of Providence in the government of the Church, delivers the cups of wrath to the angels, and they are commanded by the voice of God himself, to go forth and execute *his anger.*

THE FIRST TRUMPET. Chap: viii.

PROPHECY.

Ver. 7. The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

THE FIRST VIAL. Chap. xvi.

Ver. 2. And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous

[3] Apoc. i. 14. [4] Isaiah vi. 4.—Exod. xix. 13, &c.

sord upon the men which had the mark of the *beast*, and upon them which worshipped his *image*.

INTERPRETATION.

The first Trumpet predicts a long and peculiarly ruinous state of war, designated by the destruction of the products of the soil, great and small alike; the land is covered with sterility and massacre.

The first Vial predicts a great pestilence, at the same time sweeping the popish world.

It is to be remarked that the first four Trumpets are declaredly inferior in importance, as they obviously are in extent of description, to the last three, which are specially named "the three WOES," and are announced by a peculiar minister of Providence "flying through the midst of heaven," and crying "with a loud voice to the inhabiters of the earth;" expressions implying the paramount extent, and havoc, of the three final inflictions.

HISTORY.

A.D. 1229. The reformers in the south of France after having undergone a furious persecution, were now respited from the immediate pursuit of fire and sword; the Provençal war had ceased. As a power the Albigenses had been vanquished; but, as a church, they had

conquered. They had preserved the faith, had extended it through Europe, and had made it conspicuous even by their sufferings. The Reformation was fully commenced. The Church of Christ, for the first time since the assumption of the papal supremacy, had taken that visible form, which has never been extinguished. Yet it was still to be a victim; its "sea of glass" was to be still "mingled with fire."

The defeat of the Albigenses, and the establishment of the Inquisition, placed the popedom within view of all the objects of its ambition. But, while the blood of the saints was scarcely dried upon the ground, their cause was solemnly avenged.

A.D. 1303. Rome had slain the Reformers by the sword of France, she was now to be punished by that sword. A quarrel arose touching the supremacy. Pope Boniface the VIIIth was suddenly attacked, was made prisoner, and died of the insult. The popedom was trampled under the foot of the French king. Rome was deprived of the papal throne; and the popes were held in the chains of France during a memorable exile at Avignon, a captivity of seventy years.

The "seat of the beast" had now been made desolate. But it was to be visited with still

more direct evil. The "Great western schism" began; rival popes contested the throne; the Guelphs and Ghibelines rose again; and Italy was one vast scene of profligate conspiracy and ruinous battle. "This dissension," says the historian, "was fomented with dreadful success. For the space of fifty years the Romish Church had two or three different heads at the same time; each of the contending popes forming plots and thundering out anathemas against his competitors. The distress and calamity of those times is beyond all power of description[5]." The trumpet had sounded sternly against Rome.

A.D. 1340. The infliction was now to fall on the instrument of papal persecution. The slaughter of the Reformed in the south of France has been computed at a million of lives. The avenger that had laid Italy waste; that had "burned up" alike the "tree and the grass," and filled the land with "fire mingled with blood," was civil war. The avenger that was to make a desert of France was invasion. The minister summoned for this act of justice was England. The famous wars of the Edwards and Henries began. The conflict was all but utter ruin. Her king captive, her nobility cut off in the three fatal

[5] Mosheim, Cen. xiv.

battles of Crecy, Poictiers, and Agincourt, an English king master of her throne; France was smitten with the deadliest infliction that the modern world had witnessed. "No war had broken out in Europe, since the fall of the Roman Empire, so memorable as that of Edward the Third, and his successors against France; whether we consider its duration, its object, or the magnitude and variety of its events. It was a struggle of *one hundred and twenty years,* interrupted but once by a regular pacification[6]."

An additional evidence determines the application of the "First Trumpet" to this period. An event of the deepest terror fixes the æra. The contemporaneous "Vial" had predicted a pestilence. Italy was still bleeding with civil wounds, and France struggling with the overmastering strength of England, when the prediction was made true.

In 1348 a Pestilence, "the most extensive and unsparing, of which we have any memorial, visited France as well as the rest of Europe, and consummated the work of hunger and the sword[7]."

This tremendous calamity had begun in Asia two years before. It spread through Italy; and

[6] Hallam, Middle Ages, Vol. i. p. 69. 8vo.

[7] Ibid. p. 78.

crossing the Alps wasted France; in Paris five hundred died in a day. It continued in Europe until 1350, destroying literally a third of the population.

THE SECOND TRUMPET. Chap. viii.

Ver. 8. And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great *mountain burning with fire* was cast into the *sea:* and the third part of the sea became blood:

9. And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the *ships* were destroyed.

THE SECOND VIAL. Chap. xvi.

Ver. 3. And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.

INTERPRETATION.

The second infliction falls upon some naval power. There is a vast destruction of ships and men. The destruction is as sudden and striking as the plunge of a volcano into the ocean.

HISTORY.

A.D. 1588. The Inquisition had been adopted in Spain, in 1232, and had continued to persecute with signal ferocity. The power of Spain was now marshalled against England for the

express ruin of Protestantism. The Armada was the floating army of Persecution. It came with Inquisitors, racks and chains on board. All Europe looked on the downfall of the Church in England as inevitable. In three days this mightiest of all Armaments was ruined; part burned by fire-ships, part sunk or captured by the English fleet, part buried in the ocean. Of one hundred and thirty "great ships of war," but a remnant returned to Spain. All invasion was thenceforth extinguished, and Spain received a blow which was the beginning of her decline.

Of a destruction, complete and terrible as this, by the mingled fury of fire, sword, and storm, perhaps imagination could shape no truer emblem than the plunge of a flaming mountain into the waters. He who has seen even a single ship on fire, and, as it burns, going down, will feel the force of this most natural and powerful Image.

THE THIRD TRUMPET. Chap. viii.

Ver. 10. And the third angel sounded, and there fell a *great star* from heaven, burning as it were a *lamp*, and it fell upon the third part of the *rivers*, and upon the *fountains* of waters;

11. And the name of the star is called Wormwood:

and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

THE THIRD VIAL. Chap. xvi.

Ver. 4. And the third angel poured out his Vial upon the *rivers and fountains* of waters; and they became blood.

5. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast *judged thus.*

6. For they have shed the *blood of saints and prophets,* and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.

7. And I heard another out of the *altar* say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

INTERPRETATION.

The contrast of this Vial with the corresponding Trumpet substantiates the remark, that where the prediction peculiarly refers to the Church, it is delivered more largely under the Vials. The two former predictions, chiefly referring to military transactions, found their more distinct expression under the Trumpets.

The event of which the punishment is here predicted was the most memorable violence suffered by the Church, since the establishment of

Protestantism: The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685.

The emblems are obvious, and common in Scripture.—"A star" typifies the chief minister of a Church, or a Church itself[8].—"Shining like a lamp," zeal, purity, eminent reputation for Christian virtues.—"A fall from heaven," an extinction of authority.—"Bitter waters," waters of strife, civil bickerings, &c.

The name, Wormwood, in no degree necessarily implies evil in the star. It describes merely the evil produced by the injury done in its extinction. This style of phrase is frequent. Christ declares that he was come "not to send peace, but a sword." Thus the Bible is said to be "bitter[9]," from the persecutions that follow its true believers and propagators.

The evil is inflicted not, as before, on the land or the sea, but on the "rivers and fountains of waters." This implies a change of circumstance. The springs of rivers are to be looked for in the mountainous districts of a country; the turning those springs to bitterness and blood, typifies a mountain war.

The prediction of the Vial adds, that this is a war for religion. The angel who inflicts the

[8] Apoc. i. 20. ii. 28. xxii. 16. [9] Ib. x. 9.

punishment declares it to be a Divine retribution. "Thou art righteous, O Lord, because thou hast thus *judged.*" And, as if to give double proof, the angel is answered by a voice from "that *altar*" on which the wrongs and prayers of the saints had been offered before God; and the answer is given in the language already used by the persecuted Church, (v. 4.) "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy *judgments.*"

HISTORY.

The Protestant Church of France, established by the edict of Nantes, 30th of April, 1598, rapidly rose into distinction. It formed the most valuable population of France. Its ministers were remarkable for literature, zeal and purity. Though always exposed to vexations under a government guided by the influence of Rome; it increased in numbers, intelligence and reputation. Before the close of the next century it was computed at two millions and a half of souls.

A.D. 1685. Louis the XIVth, abolished the edict of Nantes. A violent persecution fell upon the Protestants. Some were slain, a million were driven into exile. The "burning and shining

light" the true "star" of France was extinguished.

The chief strength of Protestantism lay in the south. The troops sent to crush it were gradually resisted. The Alpine country to the north of the Gulph of Lyons afforded a refuge to the Protestants; and the mountain war, named "the war of the Cevennes" began, which, until 1704, occupied two Marshals of France, and an army of twenty thousand men.

THE FOURTH TRUMPET. Chap. viii.

Ver. 12. And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

THE FOURTH VIAL. Chap. xvi.

Ver. 8. And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the *sun*; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.

9. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.

INTERPRETATION.

This Trumpet predicts a state of general confusion and diminution of power among kingdoms and ruling authorities, represented, as is

usual in the prophecies of the Old Testament, by the partial eclipse of the heavenly bodies.

The Vial marks the instrument of convulsion; it comes from a sudden power given to "the *Sun* to scorch" the nations.

The heavenly bodies, when conjoined, typify sovereignty in general; when separate, they have separate significations. It will be remembered, that at the commencement of the almost boundless wars of Louis the Fourteenth, he adopted the SUN for his emblem, with the motto, "Nec pluribus impar," in defiance, and sign of superiority to the whole kingly firmament of Europe. The power to scorch, implies some extraordinary extension of injury, arising from that sun or sovereign. The blasphemy of the sufferers expresses at once the severity of the infliction, and their wrath and wonder that such power should be permitted to their injurer. Yet "they repent not to give God glory." The suffering produces no religious change.

In this prediction there is no mention of injury to the Church. The punishment and the crime are alike Papal.

HISTORY.

From the 13th century there had been a continuance of persecution in Spain, Germany, Italy,

the Netherlands, &c. The general crime was now to meet a general punishment.

A.D. 1687. To the astonishment of Europe, France, just deprived of an immense multitude of her most valuable subjects by the exile of the Protestants, and with a civil war in her provinces, was discovered to be aiming at universal conquest. The "League of Augsburg" was formed, a general alliance against her ambition.

A.D. 1689. Within two years Europe was covered with battle. The French armies had rushed out in every direction with irresistible success, and invaded at once Piemont, Flanders, Spain, Italy, and Germany. The war, after eight years of ruin, was closed by the peace of Ryswic in 1697; a hollow truce, broken within four years.

A.D. 1701. The "War of the Succession" began. France had intrigued for the possession of Spain, by the establishment of the grandson of Louis the XIVth on the throne. The French armies swept all before them; Europe was again devastated. But this tide of war was at length to be rolled back, and France herself was to feel the calamities which she had so fiercely dealt out to the guilty nations of the Papal pale.

A.D. 1702. Marlborough took the command of the allies. He trampled down the armies of

France, and pursued their remnant to the gates of the capital. France was saved only by the peace of Utrecht, in 1713. During this tremendous term of twenty years of almost perpetual war, kings were made and unmade; every throne of the Continent was shaken, and Papal Europe deluged with blood. But it was attended with no religious change; no reform of Popery. It is remarkable that its chief results were the triumph of Protestantism,—the acknowledgment of the Protestant Queen of England; of the Protestant succession; and of the utter exclusion of the Popish family from the throne.

THE FIFTH TRUMPET.

This is the first of three predictions, distinguished from all the preceding by their importance, their havoc, and their being the last fates of the earth. They are proclaimed by a peculiar messenger of Heaven; and announced as the three "Woes."

Ver. 13. And I beheld, and heard an angel[10] flying

[10] For the "Angel" which announces the "Woes." (Chap. viii. 13.) The Syriac version, the Vulgate, and some of the MSS. read, "Eagle." Griesbach admits this reading, and it would coincide strikingly with the "Eagle," announcing the Fourth seal, which is only a briefer prophecy of the French Revolution.

through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabiters of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

By this Trumpet is predicted an event, from which the world still trembles,—The French Revolution.

One of the tasks which most tries the sagacity and power of history, is the condensation of its materials. To compress into a succinct narrative a vast subject, full of various and complicated interests, embracing kingdoms, and extending through a large space of human life; yet in that conciseness to preserve the characteristics of the period, amounts to a difficulty which has often baffled the most masculine and dexterous understandings. Even the discovery of those characteristics themselves; the seizure of those bearings on which the whole map is essentially constructed; the delving down into those depths where the true springs of action, the mighty heavers of the surface, are alone to be seen at work, is seldom more the prize of diligence than of good fortune.

No event of European annals has been represented under so many contradictory points of view as the French Revolution. From the re-

cency which has made all its historians doers or sufferers, and from the magnitude which has awed and bewildered the general mind; all its histories are still unworthy of the name. The pen is still dipped in the passions.

To the partizans of popular rule it still stands forth a bold and necessary effort of human nature to shake off the weight of an intolerable oppression:—to the partizans of the ancient monarchy, it is still a Fiend; a new and fierce creation of Evil, without cause or parentage in the land; a sudden shape of embodied rebellion, starting up from that gulph of fire and blood into which the virtues, glories, and religion of France were to be plunged; and then going forth on its mission to lay waste the world.

A sketch, divested of the prejudices of both sides, shall now be given. It divides itself naturally into the three parts of, The Republic, The Empire, and the Overthrow.

THE REPUBLIC.

"The corruption of religion in France had produced corruption of morals. From this corruption had gradually arisen contempt of all rule and all religion. A burst of popular vice swept away the government, the throne was sacrificed, the religion was abjured. The national spirit rose in desperate hostility against universal Europe.

Abroad a succession of wars wasted the Continent. At home, an unbroken continuance of horrid slaughters consumed the nation. Life was of all things the most insecure. Atrocious tyranny was the spirit of the government, unequalled misery the portion of the people."

THE EMPIRE.

"A great change suddenly arrived. A democracy, of all others the most squalid and wild, was supplanted by the most stately, splendid, and rigid monarchy. The civil discords were instantly suppressed. The power of France was thrown into foreign conquest on the largest scale. The half-naked and bandit armies of the Republic became the most brilliant, disciplined, and formidable force that the world had ever seen.

"The army of a nation which had extinguished all titles, became full of titled leaders, and was commanded by sovereigns. And at the head of the King-hating nation and army, moved, supreme Lord of the whole, a King! himself an abstract of the Revolution, born in democracy, and its destroyer, yet even upon the throne, still the Infidel and the Jacobin; a man of military prowess, and fortune, unrivalled; the

very announcement of whose march was dreaded as equivalent to ruin; whose name, beyond that of any conqueror on record, was 'Destruction.'"

THE OVERTHROW.

"Four monarchies, never actively combined before, at length made war upon the Infidel Empire. They attacked it, not by conspiracy nor civil change, but in the field. They crushed its sovereign. He was finally extinguished; and his empire reduced to the bounds of the ancient kingdom. Yet this triumph was but a great political subversion; it left the land to Popery, as of old. The immorality, the suppression of the Scriptures, the image worship, the whole ancient tissue of superstitions that had stifled the truth of God, and made the land guilty before Heaven, survived unchanged."

This sketch unquestionably contains the substance of the French Revolution. Yet it is the work of no living pen. It is seventeen hundred years old,—The Ninth Chapter of the Apocalypse.

THE PROPHECY OF THE REPUBLIC.

CHAPTER IX.

Ver. 1. And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a *star* fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the *bottomless pit.*

2. And *he opened* the bottomless pit; and there arose a *smoke* out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the *sun* and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

3. And there came out of the smoke *locusts* upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the *scorpions* of the earth have power.

4. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which *have not the Seal of God* in their foreheads.

5. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented *five months:* and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.

6. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

This chapter allowing of a more circumstantial interpretation than any of the former, the verses are explained separately.

INTERPRETATION.

Ver. 1. A star falls from heaven; the emblematic fall of a church. It is observable, that this star is destitute of the character of "shining as a lamp," which belonged to the Protestant church previously abolished [11]. It is another church, and of an inferior rank of purity.

Ver. 2. This star opens the bottomless pit, Hell; this church is instrumental in letting loose infidelity and its consequent corruption of morals. Hell is a frequent scriptural emblem of direct hostility to God and his religion. The Pharisees, blasphemers of Christianity, are called by our Lord, "The children of *Hell*." He pronounces that the "gates of *Hell*" shall not prevail against it. Infidelity, the denial of God, is the most decided work of Hell.

From the opening of the bottomless pit, a *great smoke* bursts forth; smoke is a natural and scriptural [12] emblem of obscuration and tumult. From the spreading of infidelity and corruption arises a vast public confusion.

The *Sun* is darkened by this smoke; the throne is abolished in this confusion.

Ver. 3. A new shape of power appears in the tumult. Its emblem is a flight of locusts, a

[11] Apoc. viii. 10.

[12] Joel ii. 10. Prov. ii. 13, &c.

proverbial name for merciless devastation. The emblem may go still deeper, and imply anarchy. It is the Scripture character of the locusts that "They have no king[13]."

To this power a quality of evil, even beyond that of the locust, is attributed. It has "a sting, as the torment of the scorpion, when he striketh a man."

Ver. 4. But it is appointed, not to destroy, like its emblem, the trees and surface of the soil; but to commit cruelties against "the men who have not the seal of God in their foreheads;" the seal of God is the token of the Church of God[14]. Those cruelties are to be exercised on the subjects of the corrupt religion.

Ver. 5. In another point the office of this power differs from that of the natural locust; it stops short of utter destruction. Its appointment is the continued misery and torment of those exposed to its tyranny.

Ver. 6. This verse sums up the character of the Atheistic power.—Such is the agony of living under its government, that life becomes valueless; and death is looked upon as a fortunate refuge. Its reign is emphatically, *a Reign of Terror.*

It comes to a close; its time is "five months."

[13] Prov. xxx. 27. [14] Apoc. vii. and xiv. 1.

THE EMPIRE.

Ver. 7. And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses *prepared* unto *battle;* and on their heads were as it were *crowns like gold,* and their faces were as the *faces of men.*

8. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.

9. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots, of many horses running to battle.

10. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men *five months.*

11. And they had a *King* over them, which is the *Angel of the bottomless pit,* whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon. (The Destroyer.)

12. One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

INTERPRETATION.

Ver. 7. This portion of the prophecy presents a remarkable change in the aspect of the infidel power; its express and peculiar purpose, in the beginning of the chapter, had been to make men miserable, and agonize the adherents of a corrupt faith, &c.

But its new form is pre-eminently martial; the locusts are "prepared for battle," they spread

before the prophet's eye a mighty host, headed by *crowned* leaders.

Ver. 8. The aspect of its former state is now changed, the human countenance, "the face of man and hair of woman," has succeeded to the old fierce physiognomy. Yet it is a destroyer, it has "lion's teeth," the emblem of irresistible force. The change of aspect from the brutal to the human implies a nearer approach to the general forms and polity of civilized nations. This meaning was not lost upon Vitringa, though he mistakes its object, "Certe licet hi populi ortu essent barbari, &c. Laudant tamen historici in iis *humanitatem*."

Ver. 9. This state of the Power is distinguished by splendour of equipment. It is armed in mail. Its movement to the field fills the ear with the "running of many horses and chariots to battle." It is multitudinous and magnificent.

Ver. 10. Yet with all those differences; it retains the innate tyranny and cruelty of its former state. It still bears the "*scorpion sting*."

It comes to a close; its time is "five months."

The duration is remarkable. It is in each state the same. The period is emblematic.

Through the whole prediction the nature of the emblem is kept in view. The appetite for

the tree, and the grass, the configuration, the wings, the tail, are all parts of the original image, and have no meaning as applied to any thing else. The "five months'" life is also a part, and in its literal sense refers only to the natural locust[15]. The true purport is, not the length, but the *equality* of the period in each state. It is a prediction that the republic and the empire shall endure for exactly the *same* number of years.

Ver. 11. This Power has at its head a Monarch, deeply imbued with the original spirit of the Revolution; the agent of that infidelity and rebellion; "the minister of that bottomless pit," from which burst out the original elements of subversion; a Jacobin upon the throne! His very name conveys, beyond all others, the impression of ruin; it becomes synonimous with "Destruction."

Ver. 12. With the triumph and supremacy of

[15] "The longest period of locust life is five months. Their reaching that term depends on the heat and dryness of the season. The rains kill them after they have laid their eggs." (Daubuz.)

This, which is known by common experience in the east, has the old testimony of Pliny, (Hist. Nat. lib. ii. c. 29.) "Vergiliarum ortu parere, deinde ad canis ortum abire, et alias renasci." The rise of the pleiades is in spring, of the dog-star in autumn. The locusts are seen from the latter end of April until September inclusive.

this Power, one "WOE" is completed; one visitation of God upon the votaries of a corrupt religion has gone its course; two more remain.

THE OVERTHROW.

Ver. 13. And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,

14. Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

15. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.

16. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.

17. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.

18. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.

19. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

20. And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of

gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood; which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:

21. Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

INTERPRETATION.

Ver. 13. On the sounding of the sixth trumpet, a sacred interposition takes place. From the altar on which the prayers of the saints had been offered, a command issues for the infliction of this woe. The voice of the Church demands, that the instruments of vengeance shall be let loose on the great infidel kingdom, a chief portion of the general Babylonish empire of idolatry, and corruption of Christianity. Four sovereigns are summoned to execute this retribution. Those *four* have never been combined before. Their united power has been kept back by the hand of Providence, has been "bound in the great river Euphrates."

The Euphrates was the peculiar defence of Babylon. When the Euphrates was once passed, as it was by the Persians, who dried up the bed of the river, Babylon was an open city. When the will of Providence commanded that the four sovereigns should at last coalesce, the long impassable defences of France were defences no more.

Ver. 15. This combination is prepared for a specific purpose; not for government, nor for the

punishment of men by continued suffering; it is not armed with scorpion stings; its mission is to kill in battle; to extinguish the infidel empire by the sword; this is to be done through great loss of lives, the death of the "third part of men," an usual expression of multitude.

It is also prepared for a specific crisis; for "*the* hour, and day, and month, and year," as it should be translated, (εις την ωραν και ημεραν και μηνα και ενιαυτον,) for that precise moment, in which vengeance was full, and it was the will of Heaven that it should appear.

Ver. 16. The combination is military; its force is immense, almost incalculable, "thousands of thousands." Yet the Prophet hears the *number*; perhaps, in intimation, that it was a regular force, and contradistinguished from the originally anarchical multitudes of the infidel power.

Ver. 17. The Prophet describes this vast force as if he saw it only in action. It seems armed and covered with flame and sulphur; out of the ranks of cavalry volumes of smoke and fire explode.

Ver. 18. By means of those explosions of smoke and fire the enemy are slain.

Ver. 19. For battle is its only instrument. The serpent that springs from the rear, and whose head kills, is a military weapon.

A shell or rocket with its fiery train has frequently suggested the same similitude. Joinville, in his account of the siege of Acre, describes the large rockets thrown from the town, as, "like fiery barrels with tails issuing from them like a great sword," and like "*dragons flying through the air.*"

It is further to be observed, that the prophet, in speaking of the appearance of this army, uses a phrase almost implying that indistinct view in which an army engaged must be seen, (εν ορασει). This expression is used to describe the undefined and overpowering splendours surrounding the Deity, for which the eye could find no similitude but the blaze of precious stones. "And he that sat upon the throne was like in appearance to a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like to an emerald:" (ομοιος ορασει σμαραγδινῳ[16]), like to the look of an emerald. In the text this is insufficiently translated, "in the Vision."

It may be not too minute to contrast this dazzled and rapid view of the invading army, which gives it the look of being involved in panoply of fire, with the more composed and distinct view of the Imperial force in the ninth chapter;

[16] Apoc. iv. 3.

the polished mail, the military pomp, the regulated march, the sound of chariot and horse advancing to battle. The distinction is probably, that the great combined host was to be contemplated only as an invading force; that its sole business was conflict, and that, when that conflict was finished, the office and military existence of the combination must be closed together. The Imperial force, on the contrary, was to have had an existence independent of actual conflict; and, though essentially warlike, was yet capable of being seen in splendid preparation, still unwrapped in flame, nor sweeping before the eye in the confused and furious energies of battle.

Ver. 20. Yet the overthrow of the Empire works no reform in the ancient corrupt religion. "The rest of the men which were not killed by those plagues," the remainder of the men without the seal of God in their foreheads, yet "repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship *devils*, (demons or dead men,) and *idols* of gold and silver, and brass and stone and wood." The adherents of the Romish worship had been idolaters before; they continue idolaters still, worshipping images, stocks and stones, "which can neither see, nor hear, nor walk." The warning of the mighty catastrophe is lost upon them. They are still captive to their

corrupt religion; and with it they retain their moral corruption. "They repent not of their murders," &c.

The fifth and sixth Vials are nearly the repetition of the fifth and sixth Trumpets, but on a much more concise scale; the events having much more reference to political and military change, than to ecclesiastical. They are here placed together, to avoid the interruption of the detailed prophecy of the Trumpets.

PROPHECY OF THE FIFTH VIAL. Chap. xvi.

Ver. 10. And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,

11. And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

INTERPRETATION.

The seat of the beast, (in the original, the *throne*,) is smitten. Rome is visited with severe calamity during the French Revolution. "Its kingdom is darkened;" its sovereignty is broken down for the time. And its people are exposed to great suffering, yet without reform of either morals or religion.

PROPHECY OF THE SIXTH VIAL. Chap. xvi.

Ver. 12. And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

INTERPRETATION.

This Vial is obviously but another expression for the sixth Trumpet, the summoning of the "four angels that were bound in the Euphrates." But it alludes more directly to the memorable operation by which the conquest of Babylon was effected; the drying up of the bed of the river. Cyrus, the *eastern king*, was led to conquest by the hand of Providence, for the liberation of the Jews. The deliverers of Europe, the overthrowers, like Cyrus, of a Babylonish Empire of atheism and oppression, and, like him, led by the Divine hand, bear his title.

HISTORY.

From the death of Louis the XIVth, in 1715, to the Revolution, the tone of manners in France had rapidly deepened in corruption. The banishment of Protestantism had removed the great check on national impurity. The Regency, and the reign of Louis the XVth were profligate

beyond all example; Popery was the sole guardian of public morals, and France soon became conspicuous at once for the most active bigotry, the most daring infidelity, and the most universal and unhesitating vice, of any people of the world. The cup was at length full. The solitary virtues of Louis the XVIth and a few round his throne, could not redeem the nation; and the Revolution began.

THE REVOLUTION.

A.D. 1789. On the 5th of May, the States General opened their sitting at Versailles. On the 16th of June, the formation of the National Assembly was decreed. On the 27th it was formed. On the 13th of August, but *three months* from the commencement of the Revolution, the Gallican Church was overthrown by the "Decree for the abolition of tythes." The whole of the Parochial Clergy of France were instantly pauperized. The succeeding measures, the seizure of the Church lands and houses, the confiscation of funds, the exile and massacre of the priesthood, were but the practical execution of the decree. The blow was struck in 1789. The Church of France was the first public body subverted by the Revolution!

THE REPUBLIC.

A.D. 1793. Jan. 21. The king was murdered; he had been deposed, August 14th, 1792.

June 23. The constitution of the Republic was proclaimed; its three principles being—the sovereignty of the people—the indifference of the government to all distinctions of religion—and the Levee en masse, or summons of the whole population to arms.

August 8. The Levee en masse, (the locust army,) was ordered. "All Frenchmen were commanded to hold themselves in permanent readiness for the armies."

Sept. 28. The Christian æra was abolished. The æra of the Republic was substituted. Sunday was to be observed no more. Olympic games every four years were appointed in honour of liberty.

Oct. 16. The sections of Paris demanded at the bar of the Convention the total suppression of religious worship. They passed through the hall, shouting, "no more altars, no more priests, no God but the God of nature." This blasphemy was followed by a demand, that the cathedral of Paris should be made *the temple of reason.*

Nov. 1. Gobet, the Vicar-general of Paris, attended by a body of his priesthood, abjured his

functions and Christianity, uttering the fearful words, "all Religion is an imposture." The blasphemer was shortly after guillotined.

Nov. 19. It was ordered that in all burial places a monument should be erected representing Sleep, with the inscription, "DEATH is an ETERNAL SLEEP."

The Republican system was now complete. Immorality and Infidelity had produced their natural fruits in rebellion, regicide, and national Atheism. This tremendous consummation was all the work of a single year. The "first year of the Republic."

During the Democracy, the most unsparing bloodshed was continued through France. The armies were perpetually engaged along the vast frontier; and the Vendée war consumed multitudes. But the peculiarity which distinguishes the bloodshed of the French Revolution from all other, is the flood of it that was poured from the scaffold. The governing faction perpetually changed, and every change sent the vanquished to the guillotine. Of the original movers of the Republic scarcely one survived. In Paris the axe was in constant exercise. In every city of France, there was a scaffold covered with the blood of all ranks of society.

This state of miserable suffering, utter uncertainty of life, and unprincipled and unsettled

government, continued until the year 1804; gradually mitigating towards the close, yet still presenting to Europe an aspect so fierce, squalid, and savage, that it excluded France from the ranks of civilized nations. The characteristic of the Republic was bloodthirsty tyranny in the governors; ferocity and terror in the people.

THE EMPIRE.

A.D. 1804. May 18. Bonaparte was declared Emperor. The change from the Republican habits of France was total. He proclaimed an amnesty to the emigrants. He patronized literature and its institutions in a high degree. Ostentatious magnificence was the character of the Imperial establishments. His court was the most splendid in Europe. He brought back the old nobility, he created new. He reinstated the national religion. His first public act, after his coronation by the Pope, was to write a letter to the King of England, disclaiming the Republican doctrine of war against all Monarchies, and professing himself ready to enter into an universal pacification. The "Sans-culotte Republic" was no more. France was, in the phrase of the day, "reunited to the great European family."

But, with those professions of peace on his lips, he retained the ambition of Republicanism.

He suddenly usurped the crown of Italy, raised the French army to half a million of men, reorganized it into the highest state of strength and discipline, gave titles and principalities to its generals, and at the head of monarchs marched to unrivalled victory [17].

Napoleon was, in a stronger sense than can be affirmed of any other Sovereign or Chieftain, the soul of his Empire and his army. To the Continent his name was a terror; the battle fought against him was pronounced beforehand a battle lost; the kingdom invaded by him, was looked upon as already overwhelmed. The presence of no man within human record conveyed such impressions of certain defeat to all opposing power.

Yet, even with the crown upon his brow, he had the evil spirit of his original Jacobinism. He made war by the offer of revolutionary freedom. His only conception of government was tyranny: he was a scoffer at all religion; and in the proudest supremacy of the sword, he still loved the dungeon and the dagger.—The Empire was Jacobin.

In the interpretation of prophecy nothing could be idler than to build upon a solitary phrase or name. Yet, when the proof is complete on

[17] The French army numbered five Kings, four Princes, twenty-one Dukes, &c.

other grounds, even a name has a right to our attention. We have in the text two for this minister of the Revolution, Abaddon and Apollyon, each signifying "the Destroyer." There is no reason to suppose that the second name was the work of interpolation; for an attempt of that kind,—as in the instance of the Vulgate, "Latine nomen habet exterminans,"—must have been long since made a matter of inquiry. Nor is there more reason to suppose that the translation of the Hebrew was given by the prophet for the sake of explanation; "the angel of the bottomless pit," being enough for that purpose. The angel Michael [17], and Armageddon [18], are alluded to without translation. But St. John is "in the Spirit;" a passive receiver of the dictates of Heaven, and he writes what he is commanded. The twofold name must have been given with a purpose beyond its mere intelligibility to the Greeks; to whom the whole prophecy was a sealed book. But, to our generation, who know that by so slight an addition as a single letter, it would bear the pronunciation of the most remarkable name of the Revolution, even of that man who, commencing his career its servant, became its champion, and from its champion, its

[17] Apoc. xii. 7. [18] Ibid. xvi. 16.

sovereign; and that name too superseding his early appellative, and peculiarly combined with his crown; it may be, not unfairly, allowed to conceive that the same inspiration which, seventeen hundred years ago, revealed the empire of Napoleon, might have willed to intimate the *name* by which he wielded the sceptre.

The prophecy of the fifth Vial, relative to the sufferings inflicted on Rome and the papal states during the Revolution, was closely fulfilled.

In 1797, the second year of his Italian campaigns, Bonaparte advanced towards Rome, and was prevented from the seizure of the papal throne only by the treaty of Tolentino, concluded in February, 1797, which the Pope purchased at the bitter price of three of his legations, Ferrara, Bologna, and Romagna; money to the amount of a million and a half sterling, and the plunder of the chefs-d'œuvre of the Vatican.

Yet this was but a respite. On the 10th of February, 1798, the French army under Berthier entered Rome; took possession of the city, and made the Pope and the cardinals prisoners. Within a week Pius VI. was deposed; Rome was declared a Republic; the tree of liberty was planted; and the city and the states were delivered up to a long series of the deepest in-

sults, requisitions, military murders, and the general injury and degradation of the feelings and property of all classes of the people. Pius VI. died in captivity. Pius VII. was dragged across the Alps to crown Napoleon, was held in duress, and was finally restored only on the fall of the French Empire. The papal independence was abolished by France, and the son of Napoleon was declared King of Rome.

1812. The capture of Moscow closed the triumphs of Napoleon. The hand of the storm, and of Him who guides the storm, smote him; and he was thenceforth to be undone.

1813. A league of the *four* great European powers, England, Russia, Austria, and Prussia, was for the *first time* practically combined against the French Empire.

It is among the most remarkable circumstances of an extraordinary period, that this measure had defied all efforts for its accomplishment before. All the powers had been successively at war with France; but it was by duple or triple alliances. The whole labour of diplomacy, in the full consciousness that the hope of Europe depended on an alliance of the *four*, had continually failed. Some strange impediment had always started up to forbid a coalition which yet each and all felt essential to their common safety.

The mysterious and invincible restraint was now removed. The prophecy pronounces that it was removed by the COMMAND OF HEAVEN! By the same command the four Allies were summoned to consummate the overthrow of the Empire of blood and Atheism.

On the 17th of August, the Grand Alliance declared hostilities. It had been reserved by Providence for this crisis, "for the hour and day and month and year." Its objects were not less remarkable than its construction. Unlike all others, the Alliance was formed not for possession of territory, nor for permanent continuance, nor even against the enemy as a nation. Its declared and single purpose was the extinction of Napoleon, and with him of his system.

A host, of a number that throws even the military multitudes of Napoleon into the shade; a million of men with another million in their track, now rushed into France. England had the glory of leading the way. In September, 1813, the British troops invaded the South. In January, 1814, the Allies crossed the Rhine; they fought their road through all the obstacles of valour and despair up to the gates of Paris, and after twice capturing the capital, England giving the last blow, as she had given the first, they extin-

guished Napoleon and his guilty, abhorred, and godless Empire.

Thus was accomplished the second WOE. The first had smitten the Continent through France. The punishment had been at length inflicted on the Revolutionary throne. The loss of human life was immense. The slain of France, from the battle of Leipsic to the carnage of Waterloo, defy all calculation!

In the text the times of the first and second States were predicted to be equal. This was exactly fulfilled. Each lasted eleven years! The Republic continuing from 1793 till 1804, and the Empire from 1804 till 1815.

The prophecy concluded by declaring that this mighty lesson would be utterly lost to the Popedom and Popery. The fact has exactly followed the prediction. No reform of doctrine, nor additional tendency to the purification of the Romish Church, or of the morality of Popish countries, has arisen from their condign punishment. Yet, it is the natural operation of adversity to reform the grossnesses into which men and nations fall through long impunity. And this result has, in England and some other Protestant nations, unquestionably followed the French Revolution. The Freethinking, which the brilliant celebrity of France had made al-

most a fashion in England fifty years ago, has hid its head. It is no longer the boast of men ambitious of fame, that they are unbelievers. No man of character now dares to insult the common feeling of society by a caricature of religion. The name of Atheist now implies not a lofty superiority to prejudice, but a melancholy and frightful abandonment of understanding; not genius, but insanity. Voltaire is no more the lord alike of wit and wisdom, but a pitiable evidence of the utter worthlessness of talent without principle. The bustling tribe of his imitators are sunk into contemptuous oblivion; or remembered only with horror, as the realizers of his dreams of evil, the actors in the Pagan abominations, the remorseless murders, the mad and blind blasphemies, of the Revolution.

But, in the Papal countries, no change of the old bigotry, or of the old impurity, is yet discoverable. The decay of the ancient nobles may have rendered vice less glittering, but it is not less popular. The actual misery and beggary of the multitudes pressed to the dust by vicissitude and war, may have retarded for a while the direct licentiousness, which was once the grand business of Continental life. But with public leisure the temptation is returning in full flood. Voltaire, Rousseau, and their whole crowd of sub-

ordinate corruption again form the reading of Papal Europe. The copies of Voltaire circulated through the Continent since the peace are reckoned by hundred thousands.

The court of Rome has started into sudden life. The old somnolent tranquillity of the Braschis has passed away for the vigour of Sixtus the Fifth. The monastic orders have been raised into new opulence and activity. Jesuitism, the crushed conspirator, the fiercest and subtlest shape of superstition, the last compound of the wiliness and venom of the Serpent, has been rewarmed in the bosom of idolatry, and sent out to wind its way through Europe. New anathemas have been issued against the propagation of the Scriptures. New Romish correspondences, new missions, new alliances, have been planted through the world; and at this moment the Popedom, shaking off the sackcloth and dust of the Revolution, is rising into a haughty stature and strength, ominous of the persecution that it shall yet inflict, and in the midst of which it shall be extinguished by the lightnings.

PROPHECY.

THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL.

CHAPTER X.

Ver. 1. And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was

upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:

2. And he had in his hand a *little book open*: and he set his right foot upon the *sea*, and his left foot on the *earth*,

3. And cried with a loud voice, as when a *lion* roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.

4. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a *voice* from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

5. And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven,

6. And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer:

7. But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

INTERPRETATION.

This passage is but introductory; yet, by the majesty of the speakers, it clearly contemplates some transaction of the very highest importance. The "Mighty Angel[16]," is the Lord Christ. He

[16] Ver 1.

appears, clothed with the splendours of the first vision of the Apocalypse, when he came to threaten the crimes of the Asiatic Churches [19]. But his head is now encircled with the rainbow, for he comes on a purpose of mercy. His voice is that of the "Lion" of the tribe of Juda.

He bears in his hand "a little book,"—THE BIBLE. He plants one foot on earth and one on sea, to show that the mission of that book is co-extensive with the globe.

His cry, the summons to mankind of the bearer of the Gospel, is attested as the will of Heaven, by the thunders, the Scriptural harbingers and attendants of the presence of God the Father. The command, *not* "to write" what the thunders uttered, is but an expression of the measureless grandeur of the Godhead, whose presence they announce. Their voices are not to be communicated, for they are inconceivable by the mind of man.

There is no ground for presuming that those thunders delivered any prediction yet to be revealed. A prophecy, not to be written, where writing is the only medium of communication, is equivalent to none. Besides, we have no instance of a prophecy uttered by any but a living being.

[19] Apoc. i. 14.

The prophet, too, by his final malediction against all attempts to add or diminish [20], declares the completeness of the Apocalypse.

If the voices of the thunders had been written, and then sealed, we might look upon them as a future prophecy, but in no other case.

Our Lord calls to witness the power of the Eternal, whose presence and participation in his act have been announced by the thunders; "That the time of the deliverance and happiness of the Church shall come, and that it awaits only the sounding of the next trumpet." The translation in the text is not accurate. It should be, "That the TIME shall not be yet; but, in the days of the voice of the Seventh Angel; when he shall begin to sound, and the mystery of God shall be finished, according to the good tidings which he gave (ως ευηγγελισε) to his servants the prophets."

To this the distribution of the Scriptures is made a preliminary.

PROPHECY.

Ver. 8. And the *voice* which I heard from *Heaven* spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth.

[20] Apoc. xxii. 18.

9. And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly *bitter*, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as *honey*.

10. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.

11. And he said unto me, Thou must *prophesy* again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

INTERPRETATION.

The voice of the Eternal commands the taking of the book. And the purpose of its taking from the hand of the Saviour, is that it may be "prophesied," a phrase synonimous in Scripture with "preached," before all nations. This book is *not* a book of prophecy, but the BIBLE; for the obvious reason: It has the most express dissimilitude from the only declared Book of prophecy, the "Book of the Seven Seals." That book is a closed one,—is reserved at the right hand of God,—is incapable of being opened by any created being,—is given into the power of the Lamb alone to touch or unseal,—and its opening generates a long, and splendid succession of visions, hailed with the acclamations of earth and Heaven.

The "little book" is open,—is capable of being given into human hands; and even of assi-

milating with us so closely as to become a part of our nature. It unfolds no prediction. Heaven and earth are not assembled to rejoice in the magnificence of its developements. Yet it has a solitary grandeur, that equals the most glorious manifestation. It is given by the immediate command, and in the very presence of the Godhead.

The proof of its identity with the Scriptures is equally strong.—"The little book" is given for our spiritual food. Such is the constant purpose of the Scriptures.—The reception of the book is like honey within the lips[21]; but its digestion results in bitterness. Such is the work of the Scriptures. Conversion is "joy in the Holy Ghost," but its consequence is the exposure of the convert to persecution. This has been the history of Conversion since the first days of Christianity. In all instances of decided and extensive conversion in papal countries by the study of the Scriptures, fierce persecution has followed. The distribution of the Scriptures, predicted in the text, and of which our age is the living witness, has not yet had time to penetrate the popular mind of the Continent; but in the first hour that Popery shall

[21] Psalm xix. 2. cxix. 103. Prov. xvi. 24.

begin to discover the inroad of the Gospel, we shall see the jealous and unsleeping spirit spring up from its darkness armed with fire and sword. What would be the tolerance of the most tolerant Roman Catholic country of Europe, if some new Wickliffe, with his holy wisdom and unanswerable learning; or some second Luther, with his heroism, his impetuous eloquence, and his indefatigable zeal, were to come forth in its midst, proclaiming the Scriptures for the sole standard of faith, calling on the people to use their understandings for themselves, to learn the will of God from the word of God, to scorn the idle legends, and cumbrous pageantries of ignorant monkery and dusty superstition; and, as St. Paul cried out to the Paganism of antiquity, cry out to the worshippers of saints and images, to turn from dumb idols, and dead men, to serve the living God!

But further, this book is given to human hands for the purpose of being spread through *every nation*. This is affirmed of the Gospel, and of what other book than the Gospel? "Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature[22]." We even have the very name given[23] to it, where the angel is seen bearing "the everlasting GOSPEL to preach unto them that

[22] Mark xvi. 15.

[23] Apoc. xiv. 6.

dwell on the earth, and to every nation and tribe, and language and people."

It is, of course, not to be conceived that this command was laid on St. John individually. He was then in his extreme old age, and his earthly labours were done. But, by the emblematic eating of the book, it had become a portion of his being; he was the representative of the Gospel; and the words "thou must prophesy *again* before many peoples and nations," were, in substance,—"an especial commission was once given to you and the Apostles, to preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth[24]: that commission shall again be given, and the Gospel shall again be divinely impelled through every region of the world."

A further proof that this book is the Bible, and that, consequently, an extraordinary circulation of the Scriptures is the subject of the prediction, is given in the chapter immediately following, in which our Lord details the history of the papal suppression of the Scriptures.

PROPHECY.

THE SUPPRESSION AND PROPAGATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.

CHAPTER XI.

Ver. 1. And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the

[24] Acts i. 8.

temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

2. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not: for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

INTERPRETATION.

Those verses are introductory to the history of the Scriptures; and express that there shall be, existing at the same time, two Churches, a true and a false.

The whole site of the ancient Jewish temple, the symbol of the Christian world, was consecrated ground. But, by the command to measure off the inner portion, in which was the sanctuary, and to omit the measurement of the outer, nay, "*cast it out,*" (εκβαλε εξω) a complete distinction is made between the parts of the temple, and, by consequence, of Christendom, which it symbolizes. The act amounts to a divine declaration that, of Christendom a part is holy; and a part is unholy, "given to the Gentiles,"—is, in fact, heathen, under the Christian name. It declares also, that this Heathenism shall trample and persecute the holy part during forty-two prophetic months, or twelve hundred and sixty years.

In the New Testament, the Jewish temple is

an usual emblem of the whole people professing the Christian faith [25], among whom, however, the Apostles make the most marked distinctions. "He is not a Jew who is one outwardly [26]," &c.

Forty-two months, by the Jewish reckoning of thirty days to a month, amount to 1260 days. It has been already stated that a prophetic day stands for a year [27].

PROPHECY.

Ver. 3. And I will give power unto my two WITNESSES, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

4. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

5. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies; and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

6. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

7. And when they shall have finished their testimony,

[25] 2 Cor. vi. 16. 1 Tim. iii. 15. Heb. iii. 6.

"In genere, per templum et civitatem sanctam intelligi debere populum Christianum."—Vitring. p. 450.

"Per atrium autem exterius oportet utique intelligi ecclesiam Christianam secundum illam suam partem, qua excludi potest communione Christi." Id.

[26] Rom. ii. 28. [27] Ezekiel iv. 6. Numbers xiv. 34.

the beast that ascended out of the bottomless pit, shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

8. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

9. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

10. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

INTERPRETATION.

Ver. 3. There are three different expressions of the period during which the Church is to be subjected to suffering; twelve hundred and sixty days; forty-two months; a time, times, and half a time[28]; all which signify the same duration; or twelve hundred and sixty prophetic years.

There are four remarkable predictions in the Apocalypse, and two in Daniel, each connected with one of those periods.

[28] A time is a prophetic year. The Prophet (Chap. xii. 6.) states that the "Woman" shall be nurtured in the wilderness 1260 days; and, in verse 14, states that she has been nurtured for a time, times, and a half. The periods are thus the same.

Rev. xi. 2. The Gentiles shall trample the holy city—42 months.

Rev. xiii. 5. The Beast (the Papacy) shall oppress the Saints—42 months.

Rev. xi. 3. The Witnesses shall prophesy in sackcloth—1260 days.

Rev. xii. 6. The Woman (the Church) shall be in the wilderness—1260 days.

Dan. vii. 25. The Saints shall be persecuted by the Papacy—for a time, times, and half a time.

Dan. xii. 7. The Holy people shall be scattered—for a time, times, and half a time.

The natural conclusion is, that all those events, each occupying the same æra, from the rise of the Papacy to the French Revolution, are the same. The more exact proof, however, shall be given in the respective chapters.

The "Two Witnesses" are the OLD and NEW TESTAMENTS; which it has been the constant object of the Papal power to narrow in their use, and which its laws and councils prohibit to the people.

The essential purpose of the Scriptures is to give *witness* to the mercy and verity of God. Our Lord commands, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify (bear *witness*) of me[29]."

[29] John v. 39.

This was addressed to the Jews, and described the character and office of the Old Testament. The New Testament is similarly pronounced the giver of testimony. "This *Gospel* of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a WITNESS unto all nations[30]."

They shall "prophesy in sackcloth." Their state shall be one of depression and difficulty. The Scriptures shall not be widely circulated; their doctrines shall be the objects of persecution.

Ver. 4. They are emblematically the olive trees and the lampbearers; the givers of spiritual anointing and light. In the vision of Zechariah[31], two olive trees are seen, which probably designated the two Jewish leaders after the captivity; and in the first chapter of the Apocalypse, the λυχνιαι, or candlesticks, are interpreted the Churches of Asia. But the emblem is not confined to those allusions. The qualities of supplying oil, and supporting light, are the foundation of its use; which, in the present instance, is, by an equal right, applicable.

Ver. 5. "And, if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth." All attempts at persecuting the doctrines of the Scriptures shall

[30] Matt. xxiv. 14. [31] Chap. iv. 11.

bring down Divine vengeance. The chapters of the Trumpets and Vials detail the chief instances in which the persecution of the Church has been visited on Rome and the Papal world.

Ver. 6. "They have power to shut Heaven, that it rain not." The wrath of Heaven against the persecutors shall be the cause of a vast extent of inflictions, natural, as well as by the sword; plagues, famines, &c. This power of punishment was sometimes given to the ancient prophets [32].

Ver. 7. "And when they shall have finished their testimony." When they shall have completed their time of preaching in this state of depression, they shall be slain; the spirit of Popery, in its shape of Infidelity, shall publicly abolish the doctrines of Christianity.

Ver. 8. "And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city." Their abolition shall be local, and executed in a country of great magnitude and importance, deserving the name of Sodom for the notoriety and excess of its vices, and of Egypt for its persecution of the people of God. It has the additional characteristic of general infidelity, or, that denial of the Revelation, and mission of our Lord, which

[32] Jer. v. 14. Exod. vii. 20. James v. 17.

caused his crucifixion by the Jews. "The city where our Lord was crucified," is, like "Sodom and Egypt," emblematical. "To crucify him afresh," is a frequent Scripture phrase for a revolt from his doctrine. Jerusalem, being the place in which he was slain, is the type of all countries in which his Gospel shall be insulted.

Ver. 9. The public abolition of the doctrines of Christianity shall continue for three years and a half.

Ver. 10. The triumph of irreligion shall be marked by impious rejoicing; the time shall be distinguished by showy festivals and celebrations, in contempt and hate of the Gospel, the reprover of the national profligacy.

HISTORY.

A.D. 533. The Pope was declared HEAD OF ALL THE CHURCHES by the Emperor Justinian.

The circumstances of a transaction, so pregnant with the most momentous results to the Christian world, are to be found at large in the Annals of Baronius, the chief Romish Ecclesiastical historian[33].

Justinian being about to commence the Vandal war, an enterprize of great difficulty, was

[33] Vol. vii. p. 194. fol. Antwerpiæ.

anxious previously to settle the religious disputes of his capital. The Nestorian heresy had formed a considerable number of partizans, who, conscious of the Emperor's hostility to their opinions, had appealed to the Bishop of Rome. To counteract the representations of Cyrus and Eulogius, the Nestorian deputies, the Emperor sent two distinguished prelates, Hypatius, Bishop of Ephesus, and Demetrius, Bishop of Philippi, in the character of envoys, to Rome.

Justinian had been remarkable for taking an unkingly share in the dubious theology of the time: he felt the passions of a disputant; and, to his latest day enjoyed the triumphs of controversy with the delight of a zealot, as he sometimes signalized them by the fury of a persecutor. On this occasion, whether through anxiety to purchase the suffrage of the Roman Bishop, the Patriarch of the West, whose opinion influenced a large portion of Christendom; or to give irresistible weight to the verdict which was to be pronounced in his own favour; he decided the precedency which had been contested by the Bishops of Constantinople from the foundation of the city; and, in the fullest and most unequivocal form, declared the Bishop of Rome the Chief of the whole Ecclesiastical body of the empire.

His letter was couched in these terms:

"Justinian, pious, fortunate, renowned, triumphant, Emperor, consul, &c. to John the most holy Archbishop of our city of Rome, and patriarch.

"Rendering honour to the Apostolic chair, and to your Holiness, as has been always and is our wish, and honouring your Blessedness as a father; we have hastened to bring to the knowledge of your Holiness all matters relating to the state of the Churches. It having been at all times our great desire to preserve the unity of your Apostolic chair, and the constitution of the holy churches of God which has obtained hitherto, and still obtains.

"Therefore we have made no delay in *subjecting and uniting to your Holiness all the priests of the whole East*[34].

"For this reason we have thought fit to bring to your notice the present matters of disturbance; though they are manifest and unquestionable, and always firmly held and declared by the whole priesthood according to the doctrine of your Apostolic chair. For we cannot suffer that any thing which relates to the state of the Church, however manifest and unquestionable,

[34] "Ideoque omnes sacerdotes universi orientalis tractus et subjicere et unire vestræ sanctitati properavimus."

should be moved, without the knowledge of your Holiness, who are THE HEAD OF ALL THE HOLY CHURCHES[35], for in all things, as we have already declared, we are anxious to increase the honour and authority of your Apostolic chair."

The letter then proceeds to relate the matter in question, the heresy of the monks and the mission of the bishops, and desires to have a rescript from Rome to Epiphanius, Archbishop of Constantinople, giving the papal sanction to the judgment already pronounced by the Emperor on the heresy. It further mentions that the Archbishop also had written to the Pope, "he being desirous in all things to follow the Apostolic authority of his Blessedness."

The Emperor's letter must have been sent before the 25th of March, 533. For, in his letter of that date to Epiphanius he speaks of its having been already despatched, and repeats his decision, that all affairs touching the Church shall be referred to the Pope, "Head of all Bishops, and the true and effective *corrector of heretics*[36].

In the same month of the following year, 534,

[35] "Vestræ sanctitati quæ caput est omnium sanctarum ecclesiarum."

[36] "Vel eo maxime, quod quoties in his locis hæretici pullularunt, et sententia et recto judicio illius venerabilis sedis correcti sunt."

the Pope returned an answer repeating the language of the Emperor, applauding his homage to the see, and adopting the titles of the imperial mandate. He observes that, among the virtues of Justinian, "one shines as a star, his reverence for the Apostolic chair, to which he has subjected and united all the Churches, it being truly the Head of all[37]; as was testified by the rules of the Fathers, the laws of Princes, and the declarations of the Emperor's piety."

The authenticity of the title receives unanswerable proof from the edicts in the "Novellæ" of the Justinian code.

The preamble of the 9th states that "as the elder Rome was the founder of the laws; so was it not to be questioned that in her was the supremacy of the pontificate."

The 131st, On the ecclesiastical titles and privileges, chapter ii. states: "we therefore decree that the most holy Pope of the elder Rome is the first of all the priesthood, and that the most blessed Archbishop of Constantinople, the new Rome, shall hold the second rank after the holy Apostolic chair of the elder Rome."

The supremacy of the Pope had by those

[37] "Et ei cuncta subjicitis, et ad ejus deducitis unitatem, quam esse omnium vere ecclesiarum caput, et patrum regulæ," &c.

mandates and edicts received the fullest sanction that could be given by the authority of the master of the Roman world. But the yoke sat uneasily on the Bishop of Constantinople; and on the death of Justinian the supremacy was utterly denied. The Greek who wore the mitre in the imperial city of the east, must have looked with national contempt on a pontiff whose city had lost the honours of the imperial residence, and whose person was in the power of the barbarians. Towards the close of the sixth century, John of Constantinople, surnamed for his pious austerities the Faster, summoned a council and resumed the ancient title of the see, "Universal Bishop." The Roman Bishop, Gregory the Great, indignant at the usurpation, and either hurried away by the violence of controversy, or, in that day of monstrous ignorance, unacquainted with his own distinctions, furiously denounced John, calling him an "usurper aiming at supremacy over the whole church," and declaring, with unconscious truth, that whoever claimed such supremacy was Antichrist. The accession of Phocas at length decided the question. He had ascended the throne of the east by the murder of the Emperor Mauritius. The insecurity of his title rendered him anxious to obtain the sanction of the Patriarch of the west. The conditions were

easily settled. The usurper received the benediction of the Bishop of Rome; and the Bishop in 606 vindicated from his rival patriarch the gorgeous title, that had been almost a century before conferred on the papal tiara by Justinian. He was thenceforth "Head of all the Churches," without a competitor, "Universal Bishop" of Christendom [38]. That Phocas repressed the claim of the Bishop of Constantinople is beyond a doubt. But the highest authorities among the civilians and annalists of Rome spurn the idea that Phocas was the founder of the supremacy of Rome; they ascend to Justinian as the only legitimate source, and rightly date the title from the memorable year 533 [39].

The sixth century is distinguished by other features of that extraordinary aspect which the Romish see so portentously assumed in its ambition of boundless empire; the building of a vast number of Churches in honour of the Saints, and for Saint worship; the creation of a multitude of festivals, adopting the forms of the abolished pagan rites; and the commencement of that sullen and benighted ignorance of Scripture and literature, which for six hundred years

[38] Anastatius Historia Ecc. Paulus diaconus de gestis Longobardorum.

[39] Gothofredus Corpus Jur. Civ. &c.

brought back barbarism upon the European world.

With the title of "Universal Bishop," the power of the Papacy, and the Dark Ages, alike began.

The Latin language, overwhelmed in the dialects of the Gothic invaders, had ceased to be spoken; the Latin Scriptures were thus in an unknown tongue; and the people, disturbed and impoverished by perpetual war, had neither time nor knowledge for their translation. The ignorance had reached the clergy; and the Pope, more a warrior and a statesman than a priest, found that he could rise to dominion without the writings of either prophet or apostle. The Scriptures died out of the world's memory.

But, in the twelfth century, the attempts of the little Christian congregations of the Alps to translate the Gospel came like a thunderclap to the ears of Rome. In the absence of all rule of Scripture, the Papacy had followed the course of human nature, adding superstition to superstition, and power to power. The sitter on its throne, in the fantastic madness of ambition and ignorance, assumed the attributes of Deity, proclaimed himself infallible, the remitter of sins, Lord of the gates of Hell and Heaven, the Vicar of God, the IMAGE of GOD on earth. The fountain of sanctity to man, he made saints, he wrought pre-

tended miracles, he was worshipped with incense. The King of kings, he sent forth his oracular voice to the Sovereigns of the earth, he claimed tribute of all nations, he took away and gave diadems, and commanded their wearers to come and kiss the dust at his footstool!

His temple had been built in a night of six hundred years; and it had been, from age to age, filling, unreproved, with the strange works of darkness; the forms of ancient heathenism, the rites of the barbarian conquerors of the West, and the still more monstrous inventions of monkish dreams, the embodyings of mingled absurdity and terror. The light from the Gospel suddenly broke in, and showed the whole portentous abomination. Thousands shrank at the sight, and turned to the living God. But Popery was not to be converted. Sincerity and wisdom would have rejoiced in the light, and cast away the abomination. Tyranny and bigotry loved the darkness better than the light, and strove to crush the Gospel. A code of the most furious persecution was established against all who dared to bring the Scriptures out of the dust, and put a tongue into the dead. The Gospels were trampled and destroyed, their readers were proscribed and exterminated. Rome, in the name of Christ, raged against the Revela-

tion; that he had commanded with his latest words to be "preached to every man under Heaven."

A.D.1793. The Bible had passed out of the hands of the people, in all the dominions of Popery from the time of the Supremacy. The doctrines had perished, and left their place to human reveries. The converts were martyred. At length, the full triumph of the old spirit of corruption and persecution terribly arrived. In the year 1793, twelve hundred and sixty years from the letter of Justinian declaring the Pope "Universal Bishop," the Gospel was, by a solemn act of the Legislature and the people, abolished in France. The indignities offered to the actual copies of the Bible were unimportant after this; their life is in their doctrines, and the extinction of the doctrines is the extinction of the Bible. By the decree of the French Government, declaring that the nation acknowledged no God, the Old and New Testaments were *slain* throughout the limits of Republican France. But, contumelies to the Sacred Books could not have been wanting, in the general plunder of every place of worship. In Lyons they were dragged at the tail of an ass in a procession through the streets.

A very remarkable and *prophetic* distinction of

this period was the spirit of frenzied festivity which seized upon France.

The Capital and all the Republican towns were the scene of civic feasts, processions and shows of the most extravagant kind. The most festive times of peace under the most expensive Kings were thrown into the shade by the frequency, variety, and extent of the Republican exhibitions. Yet this was a time of perpetual miseries throughout France. The Guillotine was bloody from morn till night. In the single month of July, 1794, nearly *eight hundred persons,* the majority, principal individuals of the State, and all possessing some respectability of situation, were guillotined in Paris alone. In the midst of this horror, there were twenty-six Theatres open, filled with the most profane and profligate displays in honour of the "Triumph of Reason."

But more formal scoffings were prepared by the express command of the government. On the 1st of November, 1793, Gobet, with the Republican priests of Paris, had thrown off the gown, and abjured Religion. On the 11th, a "Grand Festival," dedicated to "Reason and Truth," was celebrated in the Cathedral of Notre Dame, which had been desecrated, and been named "the Temple of Reason;" a pyramid was erected in the centre of the Church, surmounted by a

temple, inscribed "To philosophy." The torch of "Truth" was on the altar of "Reason" spreading light, &c. The National Convention and all the authorities attended at this burlesque and insulting ceremony.

In February, 1794, a grand fête was ordered by the Convention, in which hymns to Liberty were chaunted, and a pageant in honour of the abolition of slavery in the colonies was displayed in the "Temple of Reason." In June another festival was ordered—To the Supreme Being; the God of *Philosophy*. But the most superb exhibition was the "General Festival" in honour of the Republic. It was distinguished by a more audacious spirit of scoffing and profanation than all the former. Robespierre acted the "High priest of Reason" on the day, and made himself conspicuous in blasphemy. He was then at the summit of power,—actual sovereign of France.

That day had passed the sentence upon his iniquities. It was remarked even then, that, from the time of that most impious festival, his fortunes turned.

The 14th of July was the date of the Festival. On the 28th, Robespierre was a mutilated trunk, with all France exulting over his body. A single fortnight had separated the throne and the scaffold.

PROPHECY.

THE PROPAGATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.

Ver. 11. And after three days and an half the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their *feet;* and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

12. And they heard a great *voice from Heaven,* saying unto them, *Come up hither.* And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

13. And the same hour was there a great *earthquake,* and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

14. The *second* woe is past, and, behold, the third woe cometh *quickly.*

INTERPRETATION.

Ver. 11. In three years and a half from the abolition of religion in France, it shall be restored, and even placed in a more secure and prominent rank than before. The doctrines of Christianity shall be preached with less restraint; the Bible shall "be set on its feet," to the surprise of those who conceived it prostrate for ever.

Ver. 12. But a still higher and more miraculous distinction is at hand. It shall suddenly, by the very sanction and impulse of God himself, be elevated beyond the power of Man to impede its progress. It shall "ascend in a cloud," (the scriptural expression for triumph and pre-emi-

nence,) possessing by the divine command an extent of diffusion and dominion, that shall confound its enemies.

Ver. 13. The æra of this triumph is strongly defined. There shall be, "in the same hour," (ὡρα, period) a political earthquake.

"The tenth part of the Atheistic City" shall fall; a portion of the Infidel Empire of France shall be torn away, with the slaughter of many thousands; expressed by *seven*, the number of completeness. And this catastrophe shall produce a religious influence on the mind of Nations.

It is to be observed, that there is a distinction between the "remnant" in the text, and that mentioned in the close of the sixth Trumpet[40], who were stated to have been uninfluenced by the proofs of Divine wrath given in the overthrow of the Revolutionary Empire. The "remnant;" (which should in both instances have been translated, the *rest*, λοιποι) in the sixth Trumpet are named "those who were not killed by the plagues;" men in the same class of obnoxiousness to punishment with those who perished;—Idolaters, persecutors, &c. But in the present text, there is no such description, the word λοιποι alone is used. The absence of

[40] Apoc. ix. 20, 21.

the previous designation generalises the word, and leaves it capable of being applied to all the spectators of the judicial ruin, whose less impure faith might be increased in purity by the terror of the example.

Ver. 14. But the æra of this stupendous triumph of the Bible is marked still more distinctly. It takes place before the end of the Second Woe.

HISTORY.

A.D. 1794. From the fall of Robespierre, the fury of Atheism was gradually diminished, and some attempts were made to restore the old worship. But a conception of the remoteness of this re-establishment from Christianity may be formed by the declaration of the Constitutional Bishops in 1796, that "Christianity was only a republication of the Rights of Man." The popish Church, however, made continual advances to its former privileges; and, excepting the diminished salaries of the clergy, was placed nearly in its original situation.

But this system was about to be contrasted with a Church to which France will owe whatever of mercy she may find in the coming hour.

A.D. 1797. On the 17th of June, Camille Jourdan, in the "Council of Five Hundred," brought up the memorable report on the "Re-

vision of the laws relative to religious worship." It consisted of a number of propositions, abolishing alike the Republican restrictions on Popish worship, and the Popish restrictions on Protestant.

1. That *all* citizens might buy or hire edifices for the *free* exercise of religious worship.

2. That *all* congregations might assemble by the sound of bells.

3. That *no test* or *promise* of any sort unrequired from other citizens should be required of the ministers of those congregations.

4. That any individual attempting to impede, or in any way interrupt the public worship should be fined, up to 500 livres, and not less than 50; and that if the interruption proceeded from the constituted authorities, such authorities should be fined double the sum.

5. That entrance to assemblies for the purpose of religious worship should be free for all citizens.

6. That all other laws concerning religious worship should be repealed.

Those regulations, in comprehending the whole state of worship in France, were, in fact, a peculiar boon to Protestantism. Popery was already in sight of full restoration. But Protestantism, crushed under the burthen of the laws of Louis

XIV., and unsupported by the popular belief, required the direct support of the state to "stand on its feet." The Report seems even to have had an especial view to the grievances of the Church; the old prohibitions to hold public worship, to possess places of worship, to have ingress, &c.

From that period the Church has been free in France, and it now numbers probably as large a population as before its fall. It is a striking coincidence, that almost at the moment when this great measure was determined on, the French army under Bonaparte was seen invading and partitioning the papal territory. The next year, 1798, saw it master of Rome, the popedom a Republic, and the Pope a prisoner and an exile.

The Church and the Bible had been slain in France from November 1793, till June 1797. The *three years* and a *half* were expended, and the Bible, so long and sternly repressed before, was placed in honour, and was openly the BOOK of free Protestantism!

A.D. 1805. In this year the *exaltation* of the Bible began; the first great issue of Bibles for the general use of mankind was made. Without entering into the questions that arise out of this subject, the mere historic fact is; that then, for the first time in the Annals of the Church,

the diffusion of the Scriptures occupied a large space in the mind of Europe. "The Bible is the religion of Protestants," and to them the general knowledge of the Scriptures had always been a subject of the first interest. The Church of England with that spirit, which has placed it at the head of Protestantism, had the high honour of leading the way by an Institution formed a century before, (1698.) But the prophetic time was not yet come. The impulse has been given at the appointed hour: and the Scriptures, translated into one hundred and forty-three languages, already penetrate the remotest regions of the world.

It is the supreme and unrivalled glory of England, that she has been the earthly instrument of this blessing; that, towering, like another Sinai, in the wilderness of a world covered with idolatry, crowned by the light that flows from the presence of God, and superior to all human aggression, from her has been given the Law of life, the Gospel, to the Nations.

By these chapters, (x. and xi.) the identity of the "little book," the Two Witnesses, and the Bible, is established. It is the same Christ, "the Mighty Angel," who gives the "Book" to the Apostle, and who details the History of the

Two Witnesses. It is the same voice of the Eternal, that from Heaven commands the Book to be taken into the hand of the Apostle for distribution to all kindreds and tongues, and summons the Witnesses to a height above all human tyranny. Neither Pope nor Monk can suppress the Bible now; neither Inquisition nor Army. It is multiplied beyond all the art or strength of man to destroy; the Witnesses have ascended, like our Lord, "on the clouds of power," to be slain no more.

It was predicted that the triumph of the Scriptures should precede the close of the Second Woe. That woe was inflicted on the French Infidel Empire in 1815. It did precede that catastrophe. Its triumph, still advancing, is further declared to have been conspicuous in an æra of public conflict, great havoc of life, and the avulsion of a part of the Infidel dominion. It must be almost unnecessary to repeat, that the fall of the French Empire was marked by all those circumstances, and particularly by the dismemberment of territory; the whole of the conquests of Revolutionary France having been cut away by the Allied Sword, a feature of the conquest of the most singular kind. History contains scarcely a similar example of the sudden and complete diminution of a mighty empire.

THE SEVENTH TRUMPET. Chap. xi.

PROPHECY.

THE UNIVERSAL WAR.

Ver. 15. And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

16. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell on their faces, and worshipped God,

17. Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

18. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

19. And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

INTERPRETATION.

The third WOE is the most terrible of all the visitations of the Divine wrath. It is more strikingly connected with the Divine government of the Church than any of the former; and

is announced by the voices of heaven, proclaiming that the final fall of the Papacy is come, and that the full triumph of Christianity in the visible kingdom of God and Christ, so long delayed, is about to begin. The Elders, the representatives of the Christian priesthood, do homage before God, in proof that this is a pre-eminent triumph of religion; and declare that the time of the resurrection of those who died in the faith, "the first resurrection," is come, and that they shall receive their visible glory. In this hymn, the destruction of the persecutors is also declared.

The opening of the Temple, and the view of the Ark of the Testament, (διαθηκη, the covenant) are emblematic of the Gospel; our Lord having by his sacrifice abolished the exclusiveness of the Jewish Temple, and thrown open to mankind the Covenant which was originally restricted to the Jews, as the sight of the Ark of the Covenant was to the Jewish High Priest. This seems to predict an extensive conversion to the Church from the idolatrous faiths, immediately preceding or conjunct with the final plague.

On the completion of the number of the Church, the Woe commences, the lightnings and thunders are launched forth, and the earth is overwhelmed.

THE SEVENTH VIAL. Chap. xvi.

PROPHECY.

THE UNIVERSAL WAR.

Ver. 13. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

14. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

15. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

16. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

INTERPRETATION.

Those verses are introductory to the seventh plague, or universal war.

It will be shewn in the "Vision of the Church[41]," that the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, typify Infidelity, Popery, and the influence of the Monastic orders.—Frogs were unclean, and one of the plagues of Egypt: the whole three express the combined influence of Atheism and superstition, suddenly acting upon the earth for the general disturbance of nations. The power of *delusion*

[41] Apoc. xii. xiii. xiv.

had been already ascribed to the monastic orders, the agents of Rome and persecution [42].

Under the excitement of the triple influence, which differs from the Jacobinism of the French Revolution, only in uniting to the fury of infidelity the steady fierceness of superstition, and the subtle artifice of the monkish agency, the nations of Europe, and finally of the world, shall be involved in one blaze of war.

This war shall take the world, as the siege of Jerusalem took the Jews, by surprise. It is announced by the same words, "Behold, I come as a thief." Yet, as in the instance of the siege, it will be no surprise, but to the negligent, the adherents of the idolatrous Church, and the general worldly, and irreligious portion of mankind. To those whose eye is fixed in humility upon the signs of the great coming, there will be in the circumstances of the times warning sufficient, if not to enable them to anticipate the precise steps by which the Universal Convulsion will arrive, at least to ascertain its approach, and to feel the solemn necessity of preparing by a renewed spirit, by a purer morality, and a more anxious study of the Gospel, for a trial in which all that the earth has of strength or greatness will be utterly shaken.

[42] Apoc. xiii. 14. 1 Tim. iv. 1.

Far be it from the writer of these pages to conceive that he has any right of superior virtue to impress his opinions upon his fellow-men; human vanity shrinks in the presence of such times and things. Yet he would intreat minds wiser and better than his own to examine whether, even in the events of the present day, there are not discoverable some most remarkable coincidences with the prophecy.

The close of the war against the French empire promised an all but interminable peace to Europe. The folly of human ambition had been so strongly displayed in the career of Napoleon; the severity of the public sacrifices was so deeply felt by all; and so stern and decisive an evidence was given of the feebleness of any single kingdom of the Continent against the determined resistance of the rest; that war for conquest seemed to be consigned to dreams and madness for ever. When France failed, with its central position, its magnificent army, its countless and martial population, its long experience of war, and habit of victory, and with a leader at its head, who, perhaps, in a superior degree to any man that ever lived, was made for the nation and the time, for the developement and inflammation of the national powers to the highest point of evil energy,—when all those

qualities for triumph and tyranny seemed but to increase the downfall; like the massiveness and loftiness of some great fortress, but making the blast of the mine that blew it up, fiercer and more ruinous:—what king or kingdom would again hazard the desperate experiment of rousing the wrath of mankind?

Yet, with this consciousness, which must have made nations sick of the very name of war, with many a wound to heal, and with the prospect of tenfold suffering in the committal of their strength in the field, the spirit of war has been perpetually creeping through Europe. Sovereigns have not been the criminals in this conspiracy against mankind. Its fires burn in a lower zone; it is seen in a reckless hatred of the powers that be, a wandering love of a life of plunder, liberty on the lips, with an utter ignorance, if not an utter scorn of its principles in the heart, a gambling in codes and constitutions, and an inveterate, sneering, and ostentatious contempt of all religion. Jacobinism is stripped of its crowns and banners, but its disbanded soldiery are roving through Europe, and rebellion is their natural food.

That there are abuses in the governments of the Continent; that there are gallant and honourable spirits among those who have made

themselves obnoxious to those governments; and that the cause of kings and people would be equally prospered by a sincere and intelligent purification of their polity; is all undeniable. But there has been a deep and sullen evil in all that has been done, an alloy in the coin of this new liberty, that rejects it from the use of nations. With England before their eyes, the unrivalled example of safe freedom, the patriots of the Continent have bowed down to the French Revolution. Mysterious oaths, midnight meetings, secret clubs and confederations, the libel and the dagger, have been the general instruments of their early state. But, where they had at length obtained the mastery, the evidence of origin was more perfect; the Constitution was a Democracy; Rousseau was the moralist, and Voltaire the lawgiver; the populace was the living idol that snuffed up the incense of their altar. Their Providence was Jacobinism.

It was predicted that a second influence, the power of the Monks, should be added to Jacobinism. Of all alliances, this seemed the most forbidden and impossible. The French Revolution had thrown monkery under foot, turned its palaces into barracks, confiscated its revenues, cast out its tribes to wander in their original pauperism through the earth, and, a still deeper wound,

had stricken the whole system through with the most contemptuous and bitter ridicule. The influence of monkery, on any scale of public or political importance, was pronounced to be abolished for ever.

Yet what is the state of things at this moment? A monkish war! No human contingency could, in all its circumstances, have more defied calculation. We are at war, not with a great rival power, capable of gaining by war; not with an opulent neighbour, stimulated by overflowing wealth to ambition; not with an old and beaten enemy, burning to wipe off disgrace; but with a power the most embarrassed, the most assailable, the most naturally connected with England, the most bound by the mightiest services, the most associated by mutual and glorious hazards, the most united in the noblest triumph ever gained in Europe. It is by the generous sacrifices and guiding valour of England, that Spain exists as a kingdom, that the Spanish peasant is not a bandit and a beggar, that the monk has a roof over his head, and that the King is not a slave, chained to a French footstool. Yet it is this nation and this King that Monkery is marching into the field against the giant strength of England.

The Spanish hostilities may be suppressed and

pass away, by the bidding of those Great Powers in whose hand is the European Commonwealth. But the monkish potency has displayed itself; and but one influence more is demanded, to lead the world to war.

It is predicted that Popery, in some extraordinary display of violence, shall give the sign. The Apocalypse appears, in many places, to intimate a final persecution. Yet we cannot hope to interpret the *future*, however near, with minute accuracy. It is probable that the Popedom will not be the direct persecutor; for the "power over the Saints" had been, at the close of the 1260 years, prohibited either entirely, or in a remarkable degree. The great Instrument of Papal vengeance—the Inquisition, was abolished in Rome by the French invasion. But superstition shall be displayed in sudden fury in the Popish countries; converts by the recent diffusion of the Gospel shall be the chief objects of the sword; and then "shall the time of the end come."

Another distinct feature of the final æra was to be the superintendance of Europe by four principal governments.

In the Sixth Trumpet[43], those four monarchies

[43] Apoc. ix. 14.

were summoned by the voice of *Heaven* to destroy the French Empire. In the Sixth Seal[44], the description of the universal war was interrupted, to declare to the Church that four monarchies shall prevent the approach of that war, until Providence shall have filled up the number that is to complete its people. The natural inference is, that when governments shall be found exercising that extraordinary influence, the consummation is nigh.

But, what has been the State of Europe during these ten years?—A Commonwealth. The alliance between England, Austria, Prussia, and Russia, the conquerors of the French Empire, has continued unbroken, and continued with a constant and intimate communication that forms the strongest contrast with the old frigid, and tardy, diplomacy of Europe. If but a possibility of public disturbance arose in any corner of the continent, Monarchs hurried from their capitals to meet in some remote spot, and linger out weeks and months concerting measures for the preservation of the general peace. There have been a greater number of Congresses within the last ten years of peace, than within the hundred before with all their vicissitudes. But the na-

[44] Apoc. vii. 1.

ture of these memorable meetings has been still more a distinction than their number. The declared identity of interests, the confidential form of the intercourse, the common acknowledgment of the necessity of peace, the threat of combined war against its first disturber, and the obvious result of this salutary threat in the public tranquillity of Europe during a period so pregnant with the materials of irritation, constitute a system which never existed before but in the fine theories of philosophy.

Yet, it is predicted that the efforts of those monarchies shall at length be either remitted or be ineffectual, and that Europe shall be committed in general hostility.

It is also predicted that the catastrophe shall come by surprize upon nations; the world shall not conceive it to be the "day of destruction." But the Church is commanded to be prepared for it, in the words which warned the early disciples of the Siege of Jerusalem, "Behold I come as a thief[45]." St. Paul expressly applies those words to the coming of our Lord to punish his enemies. "But, of the times and seasons, Brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the

[45] Matt. xxiv. 43. Luke xii. 39.

day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. —But ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief[46]." The warning is now again urged, because the last time is at hand; and the people of the Faith are, like the early disciples, commanded to put on new vigilance, lest at the coming of the Bridegroom to the marriage feast, even they should be found without the marriage garment, and be cast out from the presence of the Lord.

"And he, (in the original *they;* the evil spirits,) gathered them together into a place called Armageddon;" הר מגדון Mount Megiddo, overlooking the plain in the half tribe of Manasses in which Barak and Deborah destroyed Sisera's army[47], and in which Josias was routed by Pharaoh Necho[48]. The name is typically used to express immense slaughter.

THE SEVENTH VIAL. Chap. xvi.

THE CONFLICT.

Ver. 17. And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the *throne*, saying, It is done.

18. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was

[46] 1 Thess. v. 1, 2, 4. [47] Judg. v. 19. [48] Chron. xxxv. 22.

not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.

19. And the *great city* was divided into three parts, and the cities of the *nations* fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

20. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

21. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

INTERPRETATION.

The Vial is similar to the Seventh Trumpet. It announces the last visitation of wrath, and, like it, connects the havoc of earth with some direct and totally unexampled agency of Providence. In both, the fall of the antagonists of the Gospel is the prominent object. The Trumpet was received with a Hosannah from the saints in Heaven, declaring that the kingdom was at last become the kingdom of Christ, and that they were to receive the crowns so long promised. In the Vial the most defined ruin is that of the unbelievers, the cities of the nations, (in the original, Heathens, εθνων,) the Great City, and the Great Babylon. Whether the two latter are

the same, or, as is not improbable [49], distinct portions of the general idolatrous Church; is a question which must be left to the future.

The Vial is poured out upon the air, the kingdom of Satan [50]. Its effect is final. The voice from the throne declares the completeness of the plague. The mystery is finished. "It is done."

The visions of "Babylon" which follow [51], are but an enlargement and explanation of the manner and subjects of the last plague. They detail the nature, crimes and punishment of the papacy. Their connexion with the prophecy of the Vials is expressly marked by their being shown by one of the angels commissioned to inflict those plagues [52]. But their importance requires that they should be considered apart, and after the "Vision of the Church," which assists in their interpretation.

On a general view of the Seals, Trumpets and Vials, it is observable, that the Seals are contemporaneous with the two latter from their commencement in the thirteenth century. Both æras of the Church succeed a great persecution, but the Trumpets and Vials, being the prophecy

[49] Apoc. xi. 8.
[50] Eph. ii. 2.
[51] Apoc. xvii. xviii. xix.
[52] Apoc. xvii. 1.

of the punishments of the persecutors, close with the universal war, the final plague; the Seals, being the entire history of the Church, proceed one step beyond, and give its triumph.

The Trumpets and Vials are virtually the History of the Reformed; for the punishments of the persecutors were the preservation of the Reformed. If the popish sovereigns had retained their power undisturbed, nothing but a succession of direct miracles could have saved the Church. But every plague of the seven was as a shield to the Protestants. The first, the factions of Italy, and the English invasions of France, so deeply drew off the eye of persecution, that Protestantism in France increased to the strength that afterwards resisted the League, and established itself as a religion by the edict of Nantes. The second, the destruction of the Armada, at once saved England from an invasion, whose success must have issued in the fiercest persecution; and enabled Elizabeth to give her undivided assistance to the struggling Protestants of the continent. The importance of the third, the war of the Cevennes, is less obvious, but it seems to have protected the remaining million of French protestants from the fury of the king. The fourth, the wars of Louis the XIVth protected the Protestants, while they continued;

and his final discomfiture left the monarchy in such a state of weakness, that it dared not provoke a Protestant war with either its own subjects or their powerful protector, England. In the interval Protestantism increased so rapidly, even under all its political disabilities, that in half a century it reckoned nearly as large a number as before the revocation of the edict of Nantes. The fifth and sixth, the French Revolution, while it fell furiously on the chief persecutor, the Gallican church, reinstated Protestantism in its original freedom. The seventh plague will at once extinguish Popery, the head and front of all persecution; and place the Church in magnificent triumph beyond all change.

THE

VISION OF THE CHURCH.

THIS great vision consists of three parts. 1st, The Church under pagan persecution [1]. 2nd, Under papal persecution [2]. 3rd, Approaching to its triumph, and avenged [3].

PROPHECY.

THE JEWISH CHURCH.

Chap. xii.

Ver. 1. And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:

2. And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

3. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

4. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

5. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

[1] Apoc. xii. [2] Ib. xiii. [3] Ib. xiv.

INTERPRETATION.

This vision is totally separate from that of the Trumpets which precedes it. A great Sign, or Symbol, is displayed; a new view of providential history is begun[4]. Such expressions as "*And* I saw," "*And* after this I looked," &c. do not necessarily imply a connection of subject. Where the connection really subsists, it is always indicated by some internal evidence.

Ver. 1. A city, or an empire, was customarily represented on the ancient coins by a female figure. In the Gospel the Church is similarly described. In the text, she is seen clothed and crowned with the heavenly bodies, the emblems of sovereignty. Her crown is "twelve stars," emblematic of the twelve patriarchs or heads of the tribes[5].

Ver. 2. She is in child-birth and anxious to bring forth her illustrious offspring.

Ver. 3. An adverse power, a religion of evil, Paganism, comes forth to destroy her child as soon as it shall be born. This religion is the visible embodying of the old serpent, Satan. Its form, the Dragon, symbolizes the whole number of the kingdoms, oppressors of the Church in

[4] Novam hic orditur prophetiam Spiritus Sanctus. (Vitrin.)

[5] Gen. xxxvii. 9.

both its states, Jewish and Christian; seven crowned sovereignties, of whom the prophet subsequently declares that the sixth lived at the time of the vision, five being past, and one not yet come[6]; and ten crownless horns, sovereignties[7] then non-existing, but to spring from those heads.

Ver. 4. The child is brought forth, is felt to be the supreme antagonist, and the evil spirit of the persecuting religion labours first to destroy him, but he is caught up into Heaven, there to remain until he shall come to overwhelm his enemies, "to rule them with a rod of iron[8]." The Dragon's striking down the third part of the stars probably symbolizes the absorption of the chief Pagan religions into the paramount idolatry of Rome; a star being the emblem of a religion, whether pure or impure; and a fall from "Heaven," but another expression for a fall from authority.

PROPHECY.

THE ROMAN PERSECUTIONS.

Ver. 6. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they *should feed* her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

[6] Apoc. xvii. 10. [7] Dan. vii. 24.
[8] Psalm xxviii. Dan. vii. 27.

7. And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

8. And prevailed not; neither was their place found *any more* in heaven.

9. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

10. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

11. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

12. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the Devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

INTERPRETATION.

Ver. 6. "The woman flies into the wilderness." From the time of our Lord's ascension, the Church was to be placed in the same situation, in which she was subsequently to be placed during the Papal influence; namely, she was to be persecuted.

The common misconception of the text is, that the Church is in this verse declared to undergo a suffering of 1260 years. But the error is easily rectified by comparing the 6th verse with the 14th, which announces the Papal persecution. In the 6th, the Church flees into the wilderness, where she hath a place *prepared* of God, that she *should be* fed 1260 days. In the 14th, she flees "into her place where she *is* fed 1260 days." The distinction between the ινα τρεφωσιν of the 6th verse, and the οπου τρεφεται of the 14th, is obvious. The former is a prospective arrangement, the latter an actual one. The true interpretation is that the Church, under Paganism, shall be driven into that same wilderness, or state of privation, in which, under Popery, she is to remain for 1260 years. The two states are in their nature the same; Pagan and Popish persecution are essentially alike in their spirit, but the description is derived from the final period, because the longer and the more persecuting. In the latter also, she is supplied by heaven with "two great eagle wings;" the symbol of a more signal interposition, required by a more formidable trial.

Ver. 7, 8, 9, 10. There is "war in heaven." Paganism is cast down from authority. It is the Imperial Religion "*no more.*" The saints in

glory rejoice over the fall of the persecuting Idolatry.

11. They exult in the proof of sacred constancy given in their adherence to the faith, in defiance of the Pagan sword.

12. But they declare to the Church on earth, that a time of fiercer persecution than Paganism ever inflicted is coming; and that Satan, feeling his power about to close, will rouse his servants to more ferocious cruelty.

Inhabitants of the "earth, land, and the sea," is an expression for men of a great variety of countries, continents, islands, &c.—the authority is to be exercised over a large extent of the world.

PROPHECY.

THE PAPAL PERSECUTIONS.

Ver. 13. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.

14. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she *is nourished* for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

15. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

16. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth

opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

17. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

INTERPRETATION.

Ver. 13. The Evil Spirit that had reigned in the imperial idolatry, being now cast down from his Pagan throne, assails the Church in another shape.

14. She is persecuted, but preserved from utter extinction by the express help of God. She is borne "on eagle's wings;" an usual expression for Providential protection. Thus the Deity says in Exodus, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on *eagles' wings*, and how I brought you unto myself [9]:" the period of depression begins in which she is to continue during 1260 years, persecuted, yet preserved.

15. The mode of persecution in the commencement of the period is remarkable. It is by "floods," an usual and natural metaphor of Scripture for an attack by multitude, a torrent of headlong and furious human force [10].

[9] Exod. xix. 4. [10] Apoc. xvii. 15. Psalm xxxix. &c.

16. But those floods are absorbed by the earth;—the violence of the armies of persecution is virtually baffled. The Church is not undone, though her children may be scattered.

17. "The serpent goes to make war with the remnant of her seed,"—Persecution spreads from the original scene of its cruelties, and pursues the people of the faith who have taken refuge throughout Europe.

HISTORY.

The original state of the Church was the Jewish Theocracy. Religion was supreme. The temporal Power was her servant. She was clothed in sovereignty, and sustained by direct communication with the wisdom and arm of heaven. This state has existed but once. It shall exist again, in splendour never to pass away.

But it was known to all the holy men of old, that the Jewish Dispensation was at length to produce the Messiah; whose day the whole Church earnestly longed to see[11].

The Jews were, for their national punishment, subsequently delivered into the successive hands of Assyria, Persia, Greece, Egypt, Syria, and Rome, all monarchies. The Roman Empire was Sovereign at the time of the birth of Christ, and

[11] Mich. v. 2, 3. Rom. viii. 22.

by Roman power he was slain; though he could not be destroyed. The Roman idolatry was, at that period, the paramount religion; having drawn into itself and adopted all the various idolatries of the Empire.

The Roman persecution of the Christians began in the tenth year of Nero, was renewed under Domitian, was established by law under Trajan, and was continued with various violence down to Constantine, A.D. 313.

From Constantine to Theodosius, Paganism was gradually shaken, and was finally overthrown and prohibited throughout the Empire.

THE PAPACY.

A.D. 533. Idolatry revived. The Scriptures were forgotten or forbidden. The Church was persecuted with a ferocity and slaughter altogether exceeding that of Paganism, and the power of the idolatrous persecutor was to continue in force during 1260 years.

The period had begun with the spiritual supremacy of the Pope, in 533. The chief persecution began with the possession of independent power, temporal and spiritual, by the Papacy in the beginning of the 13th century. The period closed with the beginning of the French Republic in 1793.

By a common error it has been conceived that the close of the 1260 years was to be the extinction of the Papacy; but the prophet says no more than that it shall be the end of its means of persecution,—"its power over the saints." The fall of the Popedom is predicted to be subsequent; and contemporaneous with the universal war. The Papal hostility to the Church was, from the 13th century, exerted in two ways,—the suppression of the Scriptures, and the torture and death of their preachers and converts by the Inquisition. The French Revolution was the close of its power in both. The French armies abolished the Inquisition in Rome, (1798), and in Spain, (1808); it has been revived but is inactive. The extraordinary circulation of the Scriptures commenced during the French Revolution, and they are now beyond suppression by man.

The prediction that the Reformed Church should be persecuted in the first instance, by "floods," by great masses of military force, was fully verified in the armies sent against the Albigenses. Pope Innocent the IIId, proclaimed a "*Crusade,*" and the troops of France, headed by monks, and by Simon de Montfort, were poured upon them during thirty years. Those armies were boldly repelled, and often defeated with great slaughter. The war ended in 1229, with

the submission of the last count of Thoulouse. This mode of persecution was remarkable, as it was the only instance of a Crusade in Europe. The Inquisition was soon established through the continent; and on the cessation of the war, it began to persecute with dreadful violence, wherever the fugitive Albigenses, or their converts were to be found.

It is predicted that, the fury of persecution, after Paganism shall have fallen from the imperial throne, and taken a new name, shall be even more murderous than before. This was deplorably realized in the sufferings of the reformed. "We shall conclude," says Gibbon [10], "by a melancholy truth, that the Christians, in the course of their intestine divisions, have inflicted *far greater severities* on each other, than they had experienced from the zeal of infidels. The Church of Rome defended by *violence* the empire which she had acquired by *fraud:* a system of peace and benevolence was soon disgraced by proscriptions, wars, massacres, and the institution of the Holy Office. In the Netherlands alone, more than *one hundred thousand* of the subjects of Charles the Vth are said to have suffered by the hands of the executioner."

[10] Ch. xvi.

In this chapter the two antagonist religions, each in its first state, had been shown to the Apostle; the Religion of God in the purity and independence of the Theocracy, and the religion of the Evil Spirit in imperial power. Towards the close of the chapter, each was also seen in a second state; the religion of God cast down from its independence, and an object of persecution; and the religion of the evil spirit deprived of its imperial dignities, yet exercising a still fiercer violence against Christianity. But the description of the latter states was merely touched on; the former being the proper subject of the chapter.

A vision is now given for the purpose of elucidating those states, and minutely displaying the nature, the instruments, and the action of Paganism in its new form.

PROPHECY.

THE PAPACY.

CHAPTER XIII.

Ver. 1. And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his *horns* ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of *blasphemy*.

2. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as

the mouth of a lion: and the *dragon* gave him his *power*, and his *seat*, and great authority.

3. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to *death*; and his deadly wound was *healed*: and all the world *wondered* after the beast.

4. And they *worshipped* the *dragon* which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

5. And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue *forty and two months*.

6. And he opened his mouth in *blasphemy against God*, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

7. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

8. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are *not written in the book of life* of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

9. If any man have an ear, let him hear.

10. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

INTERPRETATION.

The Papacy is in this chapter shown in its full action. Its symbol is a combined image, "*A wild beast*" *inspirited by the* "*dragon*." May I so-

licit the reader's observation to the miraculous accuracy of the prediction?

A wild beast, conveying the idea of savage ferocity, and perhaps also of the natural brute insensibility to things beyond this world, ("the brutes, that *perish*") was the usual prophetic emblem of the old Pagan kingdoms, Babylon [11], &c.

The Papacy could not be symbolized by the "wild beast" alone; for that emblem expressed little more than Pagan independent sovereignty; the ancient religions being of minor political influence, and scarcely exercising any degree of persecution.

Nor could it have been expressed by the "dragon" alone; that emblem representing Roman Paganism, which had no sovereignty in itself, was a subject of the state, and, in all its eagerness to destroy Christianity, was yet compelled to pause for the will of the sovereign.

But the Papacy comprised both, the actual fierce sovereignty which made the distinction of the earlier Pagan kingdoms; and the violent spirit of persecution against Christianity which characterized the Paganism of Rome. Its symbol in the prophecy is therefore a combined one.

[11] Dan. vii.

"The wild beast," with the spirit of the "dragon" transfused into its frame.

Ver. 1. The prophet sees the "wild beast" rise up out of the *sea;* the symbol of barbarian and various multitudes. Thus, in the subsequent prophecy [12], "The waters which thou sawest are peoples, and multitudes."—The Papacy shall rise out of a state of public confusion, barbarian invasions, struggling and savage kingdoms, &c.

It shall be the representative and successor of Roman Paganism, but at the time of its rise, the "Heads" shall be crownless, and the "Horns" or sovereignties, which were to follow those heads, shall be in existence, shall be crowned.

The imperial Paganism shall have passed away before the time of the Papacy; whose rise shall be in the age of the ten sovereignties that have sprung up out of the fallen empire.

Ver. 2. The Papacy shall partake of the nature of the earlier Pagan powers, Babylon, &c. (expressed by the leopard, bear, lion, &c. the symbols of the old kingdoms [13],) and like them possess independent sovereignty. It shall, at the same time, partake of the nature of Roman Paganism,

[12] Apoc. xvii. 15. [13] Dan. vii.

and be stimulated to persecution by a fierce desire to extinguish the Church.

The dragon shall give it "his *power*, his *seat*, and *great* authority."—The Papacy shall possess the influence of Paganism over the general mind; it shall fix its throne in the ancient *capital* of Paganism, and it shall by the aid of the Pagan spirit of delusion obtain a vast extent of power.

The prophet having given the general view of the construction of the Papacy, proceeds to its history.

Ver. 3. He sees one of the "Heads" of the great body of Paganism, "as it were wounded to death." The wound is stated, (ver. 14.) to have been "given by a *sword*." It destroys the head, but does not kill the body, the "wound is healed" in the sudden pre-eminence of the beast, and the whole empire is subjected to the new form of Paganism in *wonder*.—The imperial head of Paganism shall be destroyed by battle. Paganism shall appear to be undone for ever. But its wound shall be healed by the rise of the Papacy, (Paganism under a new form,) which shall subdue the nations to more than their old obedience,—to adoration.

Ver. 4. "And they worshipped the *dragon*, which gave *power* unto the beast."

In the new homage of the nations to the Pa-

pacy, they are virtually doing homage to Paganism, the origin and essence of its power and nature.

Ver. 5. "There was given to him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies."—The language of the Papacy shall be contemptuous of governments, and insulting to the majesty of God[14].

Ver. 6. It shall insult the name of God, of his Church on earth, and of his redeemed in heaven.

Ver. 7. It shall wage a continual war of persecution against the people of God, and, "shall *overcome* them;" they shall be constantly overpowered and defeated. Its influence shall extend over a vast space of the world. And this power of persecution shall continue during 1260 years (ver. 5).

Ver. 8. "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him." The earth (γη) should be translated the "land." In the prophetic Scriptures, the "land," generally signifies the people acknowledging the God of Israel[15]. The text

[14] Blasphemy is either the denial of the homage due to the Deity, or the assumption of that homage. "Datum est ei os loquens magna et blasphemias, magno quippe cum fastu et arrogantia sibi vindicaret quæ solius Dei et Christi sunt, in injuriam Christi et Sanctorum." *Vitring. in loc.*

[15] Isai. xxiv.

implies that all Christendom shall be subservient to the Papacy, excepting those whose names are written in the Book of Life, the Saints, the Church of God.

Ver. 9. The description closes with that demand on the attention of mankind, usual in the language of our Lord, when a declaration of some most important truth was to be pronounced: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." The declaration is, that the papacy shall be punished in the manner of its crime; that, for having thrown the saints into captivity, it shall be thrown into captivity; and for having slain them, it shall be slain. And in this high consciousness that the guilt of its persecutor shall be stricken with complete retribution, the Church is commanded to sustain its sufferings in patience, and in reliance on the sure judgments of heaven.

PROPHECY.

THE INQUISITION.

Ver. 11. And I beheld another *beast* coming up out of the *earth;* and he had *two* horns like a *lamb,* and he spake as a *dragon.*

12. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth, and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

13. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

14. And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth, by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an *image* to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.—

15. And he had power to give *life* unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both *speak*, and cause that as many as would not worship the *image* of the beast should be killed.

16. And he caused all, both *small* and *great*, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

17. And that no man might *buy or sell*, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

18. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the *number* of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

INTERPRETATION.

Ver. 11. Another extraordinary shape of power shall arise in Christendom, (*n* γ*n*) bearing a close resemblance to the Papacy, like it combined of the "wild beast," and the dragon: assuming to be independent of temporal sove-

reigns, and persecuting the Church in the spirit of pagan and papal Rome. It shall, however, have a distinction from the Papacy; it shall consist of *two* parts; which shall be (ομοια αρνιῳ) *lamb*-like, adopting the semblance of the virtues of primitive Christianity, the example of our Lord.—This power shall consist of two bodies of men pretending to a remarkable degree of self-denial, humility, and holy zeal, but in reality hostile to Christianity, and inflamed with the spirit of persecution.

Ver. 12. And those men "exercise all the power of the first beast before him." They shall be by the papal commission combined exercisers and depositories of his authority among nations, and they shall compel the dwellers in Christendom to "worship the first beast whose deadly wound was healed,"—to be converts to Popery, the revival of paganism, extinguished by the sword of Constantine.

Ver. 13. "And he doeth great wonders:" this religious Order shall act with great influence upon Christendom by the usual means of Popery, pretended miracles, and by "calling down fire from *Heaven*," or exciting monarchs to destroy the Church.

Ver. 14. The object of the combination is declared. By their influence with Princes they shall

be enabled to establish an institution possessing the close resemblance of an "Image," to the Papacy.

Ver. 15. Their next success shall be that of giving "*life* to the Image," and making it "*speak*:"—the Institution shall gradually acquire a local existence, and shall have a voice of its own, a power of menace and sentence; that "as many as would not worship the Image," those who disowned or resisted its authority, should be put to death.

Ver. 16. "And he causeth all, &c. to receive a mark." *He* should be translated *It*, the Image. In the previous verse the Order had been empowered to give life to the image that it might "speak, and cause" (ινα και λαλησῃ καὶ ποιησῃ,) the recusants to be slain. In the present verse the work is effected. The Image (ποιει, in direct reference to the ποιησῃ,) compels men of all conditions to "receive a mark on their right hands or foreheads." Among the ancients, it was not unusual to mark slaves with the name or device of the master[16]. The Papacy is a tyranny, and

[16] The stamp was frequently put upon prisoners. The Athenians taken at Syracuse were stamped with the figure of a horse on the forehead. (Plut. in Nicia.) Prisoners of war were *slaves*. The votaries of some of the idolatrous worships were stamped with an emblem of their idol, thus the priests &c. of

therefore the subjects of the Papacy must bear the brand of slaves.

Ver. 17. "No man shall buy or sell, save he that hath the mark."—Those who disdain to be among the slaves of Popery shall be excluded from the common dealings of man with man; shall be excommunicated.

The translation in the text is not exact. Instead of "save he that hath the mark, *or* the name of the beast," &c., it should be, "save he who hath the mark, *either* the name of the beast, or the number," &c. which latter refers to the Institution, (ει μη εχων το χαραγμα, η το ονομα του θηριου, η τον αριθμον, &c.) the *mark* equally implying direct obedience to the papal see, or indirect through the "Image."

The Order was the Dominican. The image of the Papacy, erected under its influence, was the Inquisition. The Order is subsequently named, "the *false prophet*, that wrought miracles before the beast [17]."

Ver. 18. The description of the Inquisition having been given, this verse gives the date of its origin, the surest mode of getting rid of the

Bacchus with a vine leaf. But slavery of some kind or other seems to have been always included in the pagan marks. The Orientals stamped their slaves as property.

[17] Apoc. xix. 20.

vagueness that hangs about all description. The date, by directly referring us to history, gives the only proof to which no doubt can cling.

It may have been known to the reader, that the number of the beast, "the 666," has exercised more intellects than perhaps any one problem, sacred or profane, that ever perplexed the human mind. Whole treatises have been written upon it. It occupies a considerable space in almost every commentary on the Apocalypse. The enquiry and the failure began so early as Irenæus, in the second century, and have been perpetuated to our days by a multitude, among whom were many of the most undeniable learning and sagacity: hitherto no satisfactory solution has been given.

One of those offered by Irenæus has been the most popular. And a moment and the place of honour may be given to a Father of the Church, though all reference to the opinions of those who have succeeded him be postponed. He thus writes in the Treatise on the Heresies [18], "It is undoubtedly better and safer to await the fulfilment of the prophecy, than to conjecture and divine any names. This, however, we say, not through any want of names containing

[18] P. 448. fol. Lond. 1702.

the 'number,' but through godly fear, and a zeal of the truth. Ευανθας contains the number in question; but of this name we affirm nothing. But Λατεινος contains the 666, and is very like the answer, for this last empire is called by the name. For they are Latins, who now reign, but on this conjecture we shall not depend much; (we shall not boast, sed *non* in hac nos gloriabimur)." He even gives it up in the next sentence. "But Τειταν written with the two greek vowels, ε and ι in the first syllable, is of *all* the names found among us the *most* worthy of attention, (magis fide dignum est,) for it has the required number, and has six letters, and is old, and sacred," &c.

This passage shows the double misconception of those who have taken it for granted, that Irenæus satisfied himself with the word Lateinos, and that he had gained his discovery from some hearer of St. John himself. He evidently makes a common guess upon common grounds, thinks little of it, and abandons it for what he thinks a better. The adjective feminine רומיית (Romana,) which is generally and strangely offered as a correlative of the Greek-Latin-masculine is equally ineffectual, and but an additional instance of the difficulty in which the problem is presumed to be involved.

Vitringa, undoubtedly a man of understand-

ing, and of the most extensive learning, approaches it with an almost superstitious awe. His apostrophe is solemn and eloquent.

"'Here is wisdom, let him that hath understanding count the Number of the beast.'—Yes, here is wisdom. Let the man, gifted by grace with such gifts, here display the acuteness of his genius, the clearness of his sagacity, the depth of his spiritual knowledge, things, which fall to the lot of few; but for which he who by grace possesses them, will here find abundant exercise. If I have made any progress in the knowledge of divine things, which might be supposed from my long study and labour, and from the office, publickly conferred upon me; I still dare not presume so far upon my ability and knowledge, as to arrogate that highest rank of intelligence and sagacity, (supremum illum intelligentiæ et perspicacitatis gradum,) which the Holy Spirit seems to demand in those who are destined to explain the 'number.' For nothing can be more evident, than that an intellect of a higher and more divinely awakened kind, (divinioris et præstantioris mentis acumen,) is here demanded, than in interpreting any other part of this book of prophecy."

He proceeds to say, that he might "modeste declinare," give up the attempt from a justified

feeling of humility; but that the reader naturally expects some elucidation. He then goes through a crowd of the conjectures of his predecessors; names, Hebrew, Greek, Latin; numbers squared and cubed; disproves them all, and finally rests upon the extraordinary guess אדוניקם, for the equally extraordinary reason that Adonikam is said in Ezra[19], to have had a family of six hundred and sixty-six.

The coincidence is curious, but altogether unimportant; for it has no conceivable reference to the text, and explains nothing. One of the most singular circumstances in the whole subject, is the great variety of words which correspond to the number 666. If it had been the intention, that the prophecy should long be hid; and who shall say, that an early interpretation was purposed? perhaps no number in the whole combination of figures could have served so well to bewilder, by glimpses of elucidation.

After such testimonies to the nature of the enquiry, it becomes almost necessary to deprecate the charge of presumption in venturing to propose, what yet seems to me, an easy and consistent solution.

[19] Chap. ii. 13.

The first error of the commentators has lain in their disregard of the plain meaning of the original. The "number" is described to be "αριθμος ανθρωπου," *not* "the number of *a* man;" but a "number of man," a number, such as are in human use, or simply, a number. The idiom is common, by which of two substantives, the latter, in the genitive and without an article, acts adjectively, γραψον εις αυτον γραφιδι ανθρωπου[20], "write to him with a man's pen;" or simply, "a pen." In this prophecy[21], the angel finds the wall of the city 144 cubits, μετρον ανθρωπου, by man's measure, measure in use among men; or simply, "by measure." But there can be no dispute about the idiom.

It is further observable that the expression, "the number of a man," to which the commentators have uniformly looked as the most essential of all, is the least essential; for wherever the passage is afterwards alluded to, it is left out. Thus, in the next chapter[22], "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand[23]."—"They have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the

[20] Esaias viii. 1. Septuag.
[21] Apoc. xxi. 17.
[22] Apoc. xiv. 9.
[23] Ib. xi.

mark of his name[24]."—"And I saw, as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire, and them that had gotten the victory over the beast and over his image, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God."

The exact translation would be "Let him that hath understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is a *number*, and his number is 666." The commentators looked for a name from a number, while they should have taken the directly contrary course, and looked for a *number* from a name. The problem is to be solved by the discovery of that peculiar number which is at once the "number of the name of the beast," and equivalent to 666.

It is to be remarked that dates and numbers are the frequent instruments of the Apocalypse; obviously, from their use in fixing facts. "The 1260 years," is so habitually applied to the Papacy, that the number is almost a substitute for the title; the 666 similarly applies to the Inquisition. The words Lateinos and Romiith are useless; and belong to the heap of merely curious coincidences. What can be learned by being told that the prophecy alludes to some Latin existence masculine, and some Roman or Hebrew

[24] Apoc. xv. 2.

existence feminine, supplying neither time nor circumstance? The 666 is *not* the name of a man, nor contained in a name of any kind; it is a *date,* and, to a certain degree, a description; its purpose is to mark the birth of the Inquisition, and to connect that birth with the Papacy.

The natural paraphrase of the verse (18) is thus.—The Inquisition has been, in the preceding verses, described and denounced, by the Spirit of God; but, to remove whatever doubt might arise from mere description, and to prove to posterity, that it is the Inquisition which is here denounced and held up to the abhorrence of Christians by the Divine Spirit; the *exact date* of its origin shall be given. That origin shall be when the title of HEAD OF ALL THE CHURCHES, the impious *name of the Beast,* shall have reached its 666th year, "shall number 666." That name was given in 533. The Inquisition shall be born in 1198.

The prediction was exactly fulfilled. In the first year of Pope Innocent III., the first year of the complete supremacy, when the Papacy was enthroned spiritual and temporal lord of the civilized world—in the year 1198, was the portentous offspring of its nature and its crimes, THE INQUISITION, issued to mankind!

HISTORY.

In this slight detail of the leading events alluded to in the prophecy, some repetitions of the dates and facts given in the preceding chapters, must be excused. They are made necessary by the parallelism.

A.D. 324. Constantine by a series of battles from A.D. 312, finally conquered the heathen masters of the empire, and gave the death blow to paganism by the decree declaring Christianity the Imperial Religion.

A.D. 390. Christianity was finally established by Theodosius. The western empire stained with Christian blood was thenceforth broken up, and filled with the northern tribes. Before the close of the sixth century ten barbarian kingdoms were formed in Europe.

Their names and number are stated by Machiavel[25], certainly an unconscious interpreter of Scripture; the dates are furnished by Bishop Lloyd. 1. The Huns in Hungary, A.D. 356. 2. Ostrogoths in Mœsia, 377. 3. Visigoths in Pannonia, 378. 4. Franks in France, 407. 5, Vandals in Africa, 407. 6. Sueves and Alans in Gascoigne and Spain, 407. 7. Burgundians in

[25] Hist. Flor. lib. i.

Burgundy, 407. 8. Heruli and Turingi in Italy, 476. 9. Saxons and Angles in Britain, 476. 10. Lombards began to reign in Hungary 526, were seated in the north of Germany in 483; and finally settled in the north of Italy. This division had been twice prophesied by Daniel[26], "the ten horns are ten kings[27]." Those kingdoms all adopted the faith which in the sixth century emanated from Rome. The kingly successive heads of paganism were gone. The Roman had been "wounded to death," by the sword of Constantine; one more was to appear, but it was declared by prophecy that its time was not come[28]. The Papacy established its influence over the ten sovereignties of the western empire; and paganism, revived from the dead, began its new career, under its new form.

The spirit of the ancient Roman paganism consisted in ceremonial pomp, founded on fables, and constructed with a view to attract the people,—in the worship of dead men, whom it deified; —in the worship of Images, which it honoured with prayer, hymns, and incense,—and in persecution of the Christian Church. Popery was its heir in all those things in the face of the Christian world. It differed from the elder paganism in wor-

[26] Daniel, ii. and vii. [27] Dan. vii. 24. [28] Apoc. xvii. 10.

shipping, by the name of a saint, the statue which its predecessor worshipped by the name of a goddess, and kissing the feet of St. Peter, for those of Jove.

But Roman paganism with all its arts was simplicity itself to the new master of its throne. It was a thing of external glitter, and there its powers and its ambition closed; it solicited no hold upon the mind; it had none of those keener and fiercer instruments of grasp and possession, the fangs and claws, that were yet to strike into the very marrow of mankind. It was a luxurious and giddy, a splendid, and sometimes a profligate exhibition, laughed at by the higher minds, amusing to the multitude, popular and pleasant to all; the graver game of the idle and self-indulgent nations of the south; a more serious shape of human pleasure, gratifying the worshipper by some empty sense of duty done without restraint upon his passions, and keeping his vanity awake without disturbing the slumber of his conscience. It went down to the grave for a time, with its idle generation. But, when it returned to the world, a great revolution had passed over the surface. It found the old system of society broken into ruin irreparable, a host of new nations with new and rival interests, a bolder temperament, and a manlier intellectual capability,

struggling for mastery, sword in hand, on the soil which had once lain smooth and uniform as the slavery that moved over it. It found a still sterner trial in the presence of the true Religion, that stood, even in that day of adversity, like its Lord in the wilderness, the sign to the Evil Spirit, that his time was at hand; and putting his proudest temptation to shame.

To fight its battle through this iron multitude up to empire, other means were essential than the feeble contrivances of the past. A kingdom, and a priesthood, it must seek conquests and converts, and it must obtain the one without an army, and the other without the Gospel. Auricular confession, absolution, indulgences, miracles of bones, images, and pictures, and, to crown the whole stupendous imposture, Transubstantiation, the claim of man to be the maker of God! were the guilty and powerful means by which paganism, new risen, forced its way through the tumult of nations,—the spells by which weakness was made stronger than strength; which turned the Lombard and the Norman, that had cloven down the Roman empire, into the nerveless slaves of Rome; and bowed in worship the bold barbarian crowns and helmets of the north and west before the feet of a Monk and an Italian.

One of the prophetic characters of Popery was its "blasphemy;" the enormous crime of insulting the majesty of God by abusing his name, and usurping his attributes. What are the claims of the right to forgive sins, of miracles, of canonization, of infallibility in either Pope or council, of a right to be the sole interpreter of Scripture, to withhold the Scripture, to hold the keys of purgatory, to commute the virtues of the living for the crimes of the dead, to dissolve oaths, to dethrone kings, to break allegiance, to command that men shall be tortured and slain for their faith?—BLASPHEMY!

Pope Innocent III. writes, "so hath Christ established the kingdom and the priesthood in the Church, that the kingdom is sacerdotal, and the priesthood is kingly, he hath set *one man* over *the world*[29], him whom he hath appointed his *vicar on earth*[30], and, *as to Christ is bent every knee in* heaven, in earth, and under the earth, *so* shall *obedience and service* be paid *to his vicar by all*[31], that there may be one fold and one shepherd." This was worthy of the founder of the Inquisition.

[29] Unum præficiens universis.

[30] Quem suum in terris vicarium ordinavit.

[31] Et sicut ei flectitur omne genu cœlestium, terrestrium, et etiam inferorum, ITA ILLI omnes obedient, &c. Spicil. Dacher. t. v.

The epistles of Gregory VII. supply abundant examples of this appalling presumption. "The Roman Pontiff alone is by right *universal*. In him alone is the right of making laws. Let all Kings kiss the feet of the Pope. His name alone shall be heard in the churches. It is the ONLY NAME IN THE WORLD. It is *his right to depose* kings. His sentence is not to be repealed by any one. It is to be repealed by himself alone. He is to be judged by none. The Church of Rome has never erred; and as the Scriptures testify, it shall never err [32]."

The language of the Bulls thundered against the refractory monarchies of Europe is one tissue of wild and boundless presumption. The Bull of Sixtus V. against Henry IV. of France thus pronounces the Supremacy:

"The authority given to St. Peter and his successors, by the immense power of the eternal king, *excels all the power of earthly kings!* It passes *uncontrollable sentence upon them all.*"

The Bull of Pope Pius against Elizabeth thus declares:

[32] Solus Romanus Pontifex jure dicitur *Universalis*, Illi *Soli* licet pro temporis necessitate novas leges condere.—Papæ Solius pedes omnes principes deosculantur. Illius Solius nomen in Ecclesiis recitatur. *Unicum est nomen in Mundo.*— Illi licet Imperatores deponere. *Greg. Epistol.*

"He that reigneth on high, to whom all power is given in heaven and earth, hath committed the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, out of which there is *no salvation*, to *one alone* on earth; namely, to Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, and to the *Roman Pontiff*, successor of St. Peter, to be governed with a *plenitude* of *power*."

"This one he hath constituted PRINCE over *all nations*, and *all kingdoms*, that he might pluck up, destroy, dissipate, overturn, plant, and build."

The Prophecy had declared that, the EVIL SPIRIT which lived in paganism should inspire the Papacy, and should give it power alike "to open its mouth in blasphemy;" to slay the saints, and to claim dominion "over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations." The very phrase of the prediction is unconsciously adopted in the papal statutes: "Pontificem Romanum super gentes, et regna et populos esse constitutum [35]." The overwhelmed understanding and prostrate reverence with which Europe worshipped the Papacy passed into common language. "All the world wondered after the Beast," is scarcely more than a translation of the words of Petrarch: "Bonifacium VIII. verum populorum et regum, atque *Orbis Stuporem* [36].

[35] Jur. Pontif. Extrav. Com. lib. i. tit. 1.

[36] De Otio Rel. apud Spondan.

THE INQUISITION.

A.D. 1198. The narrative which fixes the date of the Inquisition is given at length in the History of Languedoc by the Benedictines, Vich and Vaisette.

The following are the principal points relative to its rise.

"The Archbishop of Auch having informed Innocent III., almost as soon as he had ascended the chair of St. Peter, of the progress of the Vaudois in Gascony and the neighbouring provinces, he, on the 11th of April, 1198, wrote to him to drive them out of his diocese, and if it were necessary to call on the force of the princes and people. On the 21st of April he wrote a circular letter to the Archbishops of Aix, Lyons, &c. to announce that, having learned that Vaudois, Cathari, and Patarines, (reformed preachers and converts,) were spreading heresy, he had named brothers Raynier and Gui, '*commissioners* against the heretics.' The Prelates were commanded to receive and observe *inviolably* all the statutes which brother Raynier should enact against the heretics, the Pope promising to confirm them himself[27].

[27] De recevoir et observer inviolablement tous les statuts que frere Raynier feroit contre ces heretiques, avec promesse de les confirmer lui-même.

"Brothers Raynier and Gui were two religious of the Cistercian order. They were the *first* who exercised in Provence the functions of those who were afterwards named Inquisitors [38].

"Thus it is properly to *this commission* that we ought to refer the *origin* of the Inquisition [39], which was established in this country against the Albigenses; and which afterwards passed into the neighbouring provinces, and into foreign countries."

If further confirmation could be necessary, it is given by the very accurate Fleury in his narrative of the first year of Innocent III.

"The south of France was infected with the heresy of the Manichees, and the still newer one of the Vaudois, as appears by many letters of Pope Innocent written in the *first* year of his Pontificate, the year 1198. He wrote to the Archbishop of Auch, &c. He sent into these provinces two monks of the Cistercians, Raynier and Gui, to convert those heretics, and wrote to the Bishops of the country to treat them favourably, to observe inviolably," &c.

[38] Ils furent les premiers qui exercerent dans la Province les fonctions de ceux qu'on nomma depuis Inquisiteurs.

[39] Ainsi c'est proprement *à cette* commission qu'on doit rapporter *l'origine* de l'Inquisition. Vich et Vaissette, Hist. de Lang. Vol. iii. p. 131. fol.

"We also command," adds the Pope, "the Princes, the Counts, and the Lords of your province, to assist them powerfully against the heretics by the power which they have received for the punishment of evil doers. So that when brother Raynier shall have pronounced the excommunication against them, the Lords shall confiscate their goods, banish them from their territories, and punish them still more severely if they dare to stay. But also we have given power to brother Raynier to *compel* the *Lords* to this by Excommunication and by the Interdict of their territories. We also write to *all the people* of your province, that when they shall be required by the brothers Raynier and Gui they shall *march against the heretics*, and we grant to those who shall assist them cheerfully the same indulgence as if they went to Rome or to St. Jaques." "This letter was circular and was sent to the Archbishops of Aix, Narbonne, Auch, Vienne, Arles, Embrun, Tarragone, Lyons, and their suffragans, and the Pope wrote conformably to the Lords and people of their dioceses. And those *commissioners* sent against the heretics, *were, what we have since called Inquisitors*[40]."

To those perfectly sufficient authorities may

[40] Hist. Ecclesiast. 12 and 13 cen.

still be added the confirmation to be derived from a writer of the most anxious accuracy, and whose history is only too brief to satisfy the interest excited by its learning and eloquence.

"About the middle of the twelfth century certain religious opinions began to spread over Languedoc. Those who imbibed them have borne the name of Albigeois. In spite of much preaching and some persecution they made a continual progress, till Innocent III, in 1198, despatched commissaries, *the seed of the Inquisition*, with ample powers both to investigate and to chastise[41]."

The various dates assigned by Limborch, &c. arose from the various states of the Inquisition; some writers contemplating it only in its earlier degrees, others, in its settled establishment,—a term which reached from 1198 to 1232. But, in the prophecies, an event fully begun is spoken of as complete. The year 1198 was the true date of the Inquisition.

The Inquisition had been planted by Pope Innocent, but its form, establishment, and influence were to be the work of other hands.

It was predicted that it should be shaped by a power rising in Christendom, consisting of two

[41] Hallam, Middle Ages, Vol. I. p. 87, 8.

parts, and those affecting remarkable piety, "like the lamb," in ostentatious imitation of our Lord's life; and at the same time speaking the language of persecution, "like the dragon." This power was the mendicant Dominican Order, whose two parts were its ecclesiastic and its lay orders, combined in the government of the Inquisition.

A.D. 1216. Dominic de Guzman, a Spaniard, had applied to Innocent III. for permission to found a mendicant order, but the measure was interrupted by the death of the Pope.

"The Dominicans were established by Honorius III. in 1216. Dominic, active and ferocious, had taken a prominent part in the crusade against the unfortunate Albigeois, and was the first who bore the terrible name of *Inquisitor*[42]."

"The progress of the Dominican and Franciscan Friars in the thirteenth century bears a remarkable analogy to that of our English methodists; not deviating from the faith of the (Romish) Church, but professing rather to teach it in *greater purity*, and to observe her ordinances with greater regularity, while they imputed supineness and corruption to the regular clergy[43]."

[42] Hallam, Mid. Ages, Vol. II. p. 291. [43] Ibid. 292.

"The Pontiffs of the thirteenth century, aware of the powerful support they might receive in return, accumulated benefits upon the disciples of Francis and Dominic. They were *exempted from episcopal authority*, they were permitted to preach, to hear confessions without leave of the Ordinary, to accept of legacies, and to inter in their Churches."

Those privileges, which made them a new and independent body in Christendom, were resisted by the priesthood, but in vain. "Boniface VIII. appears to have peremptorily established the privileges and immunities of the mendicant orders in 1295 [44]."

The testimony of Mosheim is equally explicit; he says, "Dominic, a regular canon of Osma, a man of a fiery and impetuous temper, set out for France in order to *combat the sectaries*. This he executed with the greatest vigour, we may add, fury, attacking the Albigenses and the other enemies of the (Romish) Church with the power of eloquence, the *force of arms*, and the *terrors of the Inquisition*, which owed its *form* to this violent and sanguinary priest [45]."

"He obliged the brethren to take a vow of *absolute poverty*, and to abandon entirely all revenues and possessions."

[44] Ibid. p. 292. [45] Eccles. Hist. Vol. iii. p. 195, &c.

"His monks were originally distinguished by the name of '*preaching friars*,' because public instruction was the main end of their institution. But they were afterwards called Dominicans, from their founder."

It must be superfluous to add to those authorities on the character of the Dominicans, or their formation of this fatal tribunal.

It was predicted that in urging the princes of Christendom (γην) into the creation of the tribunal, they should be erecting an *Image* of the Papacy. The prediction was exactly accomplished. The three characteristics of the Papacy were, its assumption of superiority to all earthly power, its persecution, and the suppression of the Scriptures. And those were the more remarkable, as no other power or sovereignty had ever before asserted such prerogatives. The Inquisition asserted them all, with, however, an acknowledgment of deriving its right to the assertion from the Papacy. It claimed to judge sovereigns, and actually cited even Charles V. and Philip II. to answer before it[46]; its office was persecution; and the universal result of its success was the suppression of the Scriptures. It was the Papacy on a subordinate scale.

[46] Per Imaginem Bestiæ, et mihi persuasum est, hic esse intelligenda *Tribunalia Inquisitionis*. (Vitring. in loc.)

The prophetic *signs* of the secondary "Wild Beast," were:—

That it should exercise the delegated power of the Papacy. Ver. 12.

That it should be known as a preacher[47].

That it should consist of two parts.

That it should pretend to miracles. Ver. 13.

That it should obtain extensive influence, and establish an institution possessing the characters of the Papacy. Ver. 14.

That it should give activity and influence to that institution, and that the result should be the torture and death of the people of God. Ver. 15.

That the institution should excommunicate and deprive of their social rights all who refused to obey the Pope. Ver. 16.

That the origin of the Inquisition should be in the 666th year of the papal supremacy. Ver. 18.

The fulfilment of those signs was exact. We have already seen the delegation of the papal authority to the Inquisition.

The attempts of the Dominicans to establish their case on miracles were notorious[48].

[47] Apoc. xix. 20.

[48] Et in reditu doctrina, pietate, *miraculis*, omnes convicit, is the description of Dominic's French mission. Multis antem pugnavit *signis*. "Est vero mentio laborum et *Miraculorum* ejus contra hereticos." (Spondan. A.D. 1206.)

They had found the Inquisition a travelling commission of two friars; who, however, had been able to raise a persecution and a civil war[49]. The superintendance of the Dominicans raised it into a powerful establishment, with a fixed location, revenues, and laws[50].

The Dominicans were distinguished by the name of the "*Preachers*[51]."

Dominic established *two* orders. One of ecclesiastics and one of laymen. The lay order was originally termed the Militia of Christ; its members fought against the Reformed, and assisted the Inquisitors in their office. They were considered as a part of the Inquisitorial family; and were thence called Familiars[52].

[49] In initio *nullum* Inquisitionis concessum fuisse *tribunal*, sed solummodo in hæreticos inquisivisse quos postquam detexissent, indicasse Episcopis.—Nonnunquam principes ad arma contra hæreticos capienda commovebant. (Limborch, Hist. Inq. lib. i. c. 13.)

[50] Hactenus igitur Inquisitionis officiales non constituebant *Senatum Ecclesiasticum;* nullæ ædes publicæ huic officio destinatæ, nulli ministri, officiales, tortores, carceres. Sed hæc omnia procedente tempore obtinuerunt et præcipue post A.D. 1250.

[51] Constat illos sibi cum simulatione *majoris perfectionis vitæ* vindicasse nomen titulumque *prædicatorum.* Populus Parisiensis eos vocavit pseudo-prædicatores Anti-Christi successores. (Aquinas, Vitring. in loc.)

[52] Llorente, Hist. Inq.

The Inquisition was given into the hands of the Dominicans about 1217. It was more fully authenticated and formed in 1227, in the Pontificate of Gregory IX. who had been the zealous protector of Dominic. It was introduced into Spain in 1232, which from that time became the chief seat of the Inquisition. In 1486 a new model of the Inquisition was sanctioned by Innocent VIII; a royal council was created; its inferior tribunals received authority; a new code of horrible laws began; and, with Torquemada at its head, the Inquisition of Spain, then the most powerful of European kingdoms, and about to assume the sovereignty of the new world, planted its branches in the most remote dependencies of the empire, and became the scourge of mankind.

The slaughters committed by the Inquisition are now beyond any accurate calculation, but they stand a fearful rivalry with the most prodigal expenditure of blood by war. The tribunal went on its course of plunder, imprisonment, torture, and burning, for six hundred years! During the last century, the common feeling of mankind had so far penetrated even within the walls of the Inquisition, that the chief cruelties were kept from the public eye. Yet a Nun was burnt alive by the Spanish Inquisition so late as

the year 1781[53]. But what calculation of the slain can give us the true estimate of the evil, the myriads of broken hearts of orphans, widows, parents deprived of their children, families banished and beggared; the life of perpetual fear in the presence of a tribunal against which no man at any hour was secure; in whose hands torture, death, or an imprisonment of a length and severity that made after-life useless, and from which no man came, but as hardly escaped from the grave? And what are we to think of the *Religion* that could create, sanction, and triumph in this tribunal? What of the abject and desperate prostration of mind which that religion must labour to produce, before it could venture to lay the weight of the Inquisition on the world? What of the hideous repulsion of all the principles of Christianity, in the establishment of this formal and cold-blooded system of murder? We may presumptuously doubt, if we will, the Scripture that declares the existence and hostility of the Evil Spirit; but on what other conception can human reason account for the horrors of the Inquisition? we are driven back to the revealed Word, and forced to see, in this triumph of torture and death, a cruelty be-

[53] Llorente, Hist. Inq.

yond man, the form of the Fiend enveloped and enthroned in the circle of agony and flame.

A.D. 1808. In the overthrow of the Inquisition in Rome and Spain, Christianity was not the impulse. The decree of Napoleon, issued from his head-quarters near Madrid, declared that "the tribunal was an encroachment on royal authority." Its end was decided by a bold usurper, who would suffer no mine, charged whether by priest or people, to lie under his feet.

A.D. 1813. The abolition was renewed by the General Cortes, as essential to the constitution.

A.D. 1814. The tribunal was revived by Ferdinand "at the request of the clergy, corporations," &c. But it has not committed any public atrocities. A remarkable change in the papal councils has virtually completed what the French Revolution began. Pius the VIIth had scarcely returned, under the sanction of the allied sovereigns, when it was declared, that the use of *torture* in the holy office was abolished, and that the papal decree on this head had been communicated to Spain and Portugal. In March, 1816, the Inquisition was stated, in a letter of the Portuguese ambassador to the papal court, to be thenceforth formally suppressed in Portugal; and in the same year the Pope annulled a sentence of the Inquisition of Ravenna; and pro-

nounced that in all trials for heresy the accuser shall be confronted with the accused; and the trial be so conducted as not to involve death [54].

It would be unfair to deny that humanity and common sense may have had their share in this measure; but persecution is interwoven with the claim of Infallibility; the crime had been too long continued, and too fiercely upheld for an unsuspected repentance; and we must look for the chief motives of the suppression to the known will of the allied sovereigns, and to the older discovery that the Inquisition, if generally a remorseless servant of popery, was sometimes a haughty and stubborn opponent of the Pope. "The government considers it to be *dangerous* to allow a body to exist which is useless, and always armed against *reason*," is the language of one of the writers, who announces the measure, and his assertion carries with it the weight to be derived from the history of the Popedom.

The extinction of *torture* and *secrecy* is the virtual extinction of the tribunal. The power of the Pope, as a *systematic* persecutor, has been annulled by the events growing out of the Republic of 1793. The prophecy is fulfilled.

[54] Llorente, Hist. Inq.

Yet it is predicted that persecution shall yet make one fierce struggle, in which the Papacy with its auxiliar ministers shall be conspicuous. In what shape that calamity may come is still obscure, but its time shall be brief. The *system* of persecution was broken in the same æra that saw the chains fall from around the Bible.

PROPHECY.

THE CHURCH TRIUMPHANT.

CHAPTER XIV.

Ver. 1. And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

2. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: And I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

3. And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

4. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb.

5. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

6. And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that

dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

7. Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

8. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

9. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

10. The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

11. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

12. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

13. And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

14. And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.

15. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in

thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

16. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

17. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

18. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

19. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

20. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse-bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

INTERPRETATION.

Ver. 1. As the preceding chapter began with a view of that state to which the Papacy was to arrive at the fulness of its power, so this chapter gives at its commencement a view of the Church in the triumph to which it shall arrive only at the close of the present order of the world.

The 144,000 standing on mount Sion are the Church of God in its completed number on earth. Thus, the Apostle; "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God[55]."

[55] Heb. xiii. 22.

Ver. 2. Its completion is a subject of rejoicing in Heaven. It holds a communication of joy and thanksgiving with heaven neither understood nor shared in by the rest of mankind.

Ver. 3, 4. Those are they which were not defiled by turning away to image worship; they are henceforth to be in the perpetual presence of the Lord; they are purified from all sin through his blood.

Ver. 6, 7. The church having been shown to the prophet in its triumph, the steps by which that triumph is to arrive are now detailed. The first distinct point of the advance was the general diffusion of the Bible through the world, an evidence to all nations that the time of the final catastrophe is at hand, "the hour of his judgment is come."

Ver. 8. Connected with this diffusion was the sentence passed on the Papacy; whose career of persecution was broken off at the same period.

Ver. 9, 10, 11. A summons goes forth, whether by the transmission of the Bible alone, or by missions in conjunction with it to the papal nations, adjuring them to fly to the Gospel from the utter ruin that is about to overwhelm the Papacy, its dominions, and its people.

Ver. 12. This ruin has been long since predicted as the punishment of its persecution of

the people of God. "He that killeth with the sword, must be killed by the sword; this is the patience and faith of the saints [56]."

Ver. 13. The voice of God, the "voice from heaven," declares that the saints who now die shall not, like those who died before, be retarded from their glory in the kingdom of the Lord. They shall soon enter into their *rest*, the seventh age, the Sabbath of God; "their works shall follow them," they shall receive without delay the reward of their labours in the cause of holiness. The end of human evil and of the polluted state of the world is at hand.

Ver. 14, 15, 16. The day of the Divine Visitation comes; our Lord, at length crowned, being about to receive his kingdom, first gathers his people, the wheat of the great harvest. The earth is reaped, probably by a brief but violent persecution.

Ver. 17, 18, 19, 20. The final affliction begins, the winepress is trodden, the frequent Scripture emblem of havoc [57]. There is boundless destruction of life in battle, "blood to the horses' bridles." Sixteen hundred furlongs was the measurement of the land of Canaan [58]. The visitation is merciless War.

[56] Apoc. xiii. 10. [57] Joel iii. 13.

[58] Mede states it to be also the measurement of the Papal territory.

Thus the Vision of the Church terminates, like the Seals, Trumpets, and Vials, in an universal war. The 1600 furlongs, comprehending the whole Jewish territory, are the symbol of the whole of Christendom; which, we may easily conceive, cannot be involved in hostilities of such fierceness, without involving all nations. We are to observe also how closely this vision coincides with those already detailed, which place the diffusion of the Bible at but a short interval from the final convulsion.

PROPHECY.

THE FALL OF PAPAL ROME.

CHAPTER XVII.

Ver. 1. And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:

2. With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

3. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

4. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stone, and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:

5. And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

6. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

7. And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

8. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not: and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

9. And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

10. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

11. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

12. And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

13. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

14. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for he is Lord of lords,

and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

15. And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

16. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

17. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

18. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

INTERPRETATION.

The prophecy of the seven Vials had closed with a compressed statement of the final War. But the great purpose of that war being the destruction of the Papacy, and the consequent security and triumph of the Church, a separate vision was reserved for a subject of such interest to the people of God. The Vision is distinct from the Vials, for the prophet is led away into the desert; and it is yet connected with them, for its developement is assigned to one of the seven angels.

Ver. 1. The Vision is announced as a detail of the final inflictions on the great Harlot, which had corrupted Christendom; and which is (ver. 18.)

defined to be the city that in the time of St. John governed the world. This description was equivalent to the name, ROME.

The preceding visions were directed to the Papacy, or general dominion of Popery over Christendom; the immediate vision narrows itself to Rome, the capital of idolatry.

Ver. 3. She is seen under the usual ancient emblem of a female figure. The mention of crowns on the several sovereignties composing the Papal Church, and as such, supporting Rome, is omitted; the object of the vision being Rome alone and supreme.

Ver. 4. Her system is splendid, profligate, and idolatrous.

Ver. 5. She is the mother-city of all the idolatries and impurities of worship throughout Christendom.

Ver. 6. She is stained and intoxicated with the blood of the people of God. Her magnificence and power over mankind are calculated to excite the wonder of the prophet. "The blood of the *saints*," and "the blood of the *martyrs* of *Jesus*," probably imply the double stain of the persecution of the immediate followers of our Lord, and of the Christians of the later ages; identifying Pagan with Papal Rome, and making the latter accountable for her inheritance of crime.

Ver. 7, 8. The Angel interprets the Symbol. The beast on which the woman sits, is the Papacy; whose religion is but another name for Paganism. In its shape of Paganism it *had existed.* In its shape of Papacy it did not *yet exist.* But it *should exist.* Its birth-place is the bottomless pit. And to the bottomless pit it shall return. It shall have the power of delusion on earth over those who are not the servants of the Gospel.

The text "The beast that was, and is not, and yet is," should probably be translated "that was, and is not, and is at hand." The true reading in the original seems to be και παρεστιν. The reading is supported by MSS., it differs in the slightest possible degree from the common reading, (καιπερ εστιν,) so far as the *letters* are concerned; and it has the advantage of fully agreeing with the former clause of the verse, "The beast that thou sawest, was, and is, and shall ascend," of which it is indeed but a repetition. The reading preferred by Griesbach is και παρεσται, a change of *three* letters without any additional advantage. His rule, however, may supply a key to his criticism. "Præferatur lectio brevior, *obscurior*, *durior*, sensum FALSUM, aut apparenter falsum, fundens[58]."

[58] Pr. ad N. Test.

Thus the triumph of emendation is to be perplexity. The rule has been often put in practice, but perhaps seldom so candidly avowed.

Ver. 9, 10. The seven heads symbolize seven mountains, and *also* seven kings. The translation, "*there* are seven kings," is not sufficiently close to the original, (αι επτα κεφαλαι ορη εισι επτα, —και βασιλεις επτα εισι.)

The site of Rome on the seven hills is matter of such common knowledge as to prohibit quotation. But their name of mountains has been thought so far too magnificent, as to be applicable only symbolically. For this there seems no necessity. Mons and Collis were formerly used without much distinction, and the "seven hills" are expressly called by a popular classic, "septem dominos *montes*[59]." The evident purpose of the vision was to point out the city with a plainness beyond all mistake; and this it does in two ways; by a *circumstance* in which it shared with no other, and by a *situation* equally peculiar[60]. It designates the seat of the beast as at once the "mistress of the world," and the "city of the seven hills." Either designation

[59] Mart. Epig. 64. l. 4.

[60] Constantinople has been said to reckon its seven hills, but apparently in mere imitation of Rome.

perhaps strong enough, but combined, unanswerable.

But those heads are also seven kings; in prophetic language, kings are kingdoms[61]. Five are fallen, Assyria, Persia, Greece, Egypt, Syria; one existed at the time of the vision, Imperial Rome; and a seventh was to come, the empire of Charlemagne and his German successors.

Charlemagne was crowned Emperor of the West, by the Pope, in the year 800. He was sovereign of Rome. His successors asserted the sovereignty; and the chief civil magistrate, the præfect of Rome, took an oath of allegiance to them. The domination continued from A.D. 800, until A.D. 1198, when Innocent III. declared the Popedom independent of earthly power.

In this passage (ver. 10.) is one of those extraordinary instances of prophetic accuracy, that may well excite feelings higher than wonder.

"The beast that was, and is not, even he is the *eighth*, and is *of the seven*." The interchange of government between the new Imperial head of Rome and the Pope, was of the most curious intimacy. Charlemagne was nominally king, the Pope actually exercised the power. During the

[61] Dan. vii. 17, &c. Apoc. xvii. 12.

long absences of the great conqueror of his day; from Italy, the Pope was sovereign. In his presence the Pope acknowledged his emperor. Thus, the Pope was monarch or vassal, according to the point of view in which the spectator stood. If he looked at him from Germany, he saw but the most sacred of the imperial subjects. If he stood within the shadow of his presence at Rome, he saw a great potentate exercising full authority, with the keys of St. Peter in his hand, and the crown of Christendom on his forehead, scorning the remote sceptre of a barbarian, and summoning the kings of the earth to kneel at his feet. The commixture of sovereignty was sustained in even its most minute bearings. The names of the Popes and the emperors were joined in the government of the Roman territory, and in the proclamations; even their effigies are to be found on the same coin. The Popedom was thus, at once, "the eighth," a new power, a spiritual monarchy; and one "of the seven," a temporal monarchy; and, like the others, idolatrous and persecuting. Charlemagne was not an idolater; he even wrote against image-worship, but he was a man of blood; and his massacre of the Saxons is enough to exclude him from the name of Christian. But his successors fell into idolatry with the proneness of Paganism,

and lent themselves to the guiltiest violences of the Popedom.

Ver. 12. The prediction defines the epoch of the Papacy by the formation of the Ten kingdoms of the western empire. "They shall receive power *one hour* with the beast." The translation should be, "in the same æra," (μιαν ωραν.) The ten kingdoms shall be *contemporaneous*, in contradistinction to the "seven heads," which were *successive*.

Ver. 13. It is predicted that those kingdoms shall all alike embrace popery, and that, not content with the simple admission of its doctrines, they shall assist it with their physical means.

Ver. 14. And this assistance shall be directed to warfare with the Church; they shall aid the Popes as persecutors.

Ver. 15, 16. But the period shall come, when their arms will be turned against the popedom, which they shall destroy. Their acknowledgement of the doctrines, and their obedience to the authority of the popedom having been suffered to subsist, only until the fulfilment of a great providential design.

Ver. 18. The city is Rome. In the former verse, (5.) it had been called Babylon, an evidence in itself of the symbolical application of

the names of the ancient seats of impurity and idolatry. It is striking to find such remorseless advocates for popery as Baronius and Bellarmin unhesitatingly affixing the name on Rome [62].

PROPHECY.

THE FALL OF PAPAL ROME.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Ver. 1. And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

2. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

3. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

4. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

5. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

[62] Certissimum est nomine Babylonis Romam urbem significari, (Baron. ad A. 45.) Johannes in Apocalypsi passim Romam vocat Babylonem. (Bellar. de Rom. Pontif. l. iii. c. 13. Newton.) They however contend that it is confined to ancient Rome.

6. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.

7. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

8. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine: and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

9. And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning.

10. Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

11. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth her merchandise any more:

12. The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,

13. And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

14. And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are de-

parted from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

15. The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,

16. And saying, Alas, alas that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stones, and pearls,

17. For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off,

18. And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!

19. And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.

20. Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.

21. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.

22. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;

23. And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all

in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.

24. And in her were found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

INTERPRETATION.

This chapter gives a view of the wrath of heaven against papal Rome. It is in some degree a parallelism with the concluding chapter of the Vision of the Church [63], and commences with a declaration that sentence has been passed upon Rome; which is in consequence to be delivered over to ruin; and that those who would avail themselves of the Divine mercy, must hasten to abandon her communion. "Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

Ver. 4. This language had been previously used by St. Paul, in his exhortation to the pagan converts, "What agreement hath the temple of God with idols, for ye are the temple of the living God.—Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you [64]."

[63] Apoc. xiv. [64] 2 Corinth. xvi. 17.

The denunciations of the papal crimes and ruin, the sorrows of those who had indulged themselves in her temptations or carried on a luxurious and corrupting traffic with her in spiritual things, symbolized by the dealings of merchants in spices, &c. are expressed nearly in the language of the ancient prophets on the fall of Babylon and Tyre[65]. But as the fulfilment is still future no exact elucidation can be given.

PROPHECY.

THE FALL OF PAPAL ROME.

CHAPTER XIX.

Ver. 1. And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God;

2. For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

3. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

4. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.

5. And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise

[65] Isaiah xxii. Ezek. xxvi. 27, &c.

our God all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.

6. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

7. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

8. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

9. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

10. And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

11. And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

12. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

13. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called the Word of God.

14. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

15. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

16. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

17. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

18. That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

19. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

20. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

21. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

INTERPRETATION.

Ver. 1. The prophet beholds the rejoicing of the saints in heaven over the fall of their great enemy, which had been announced in the preceding chapter, and is now to be completed by

the direct interposition of our Lord. They rejoice in it, as the sign that the æra of happiness is about to begin.

Ver. 10. Overwhelmed by gratitude and wonder the prophet prostrates himself before the angel, who forbids all semblance of worship, declaring that it is not for angels but for God alone; angels being subordinate agents and fellow-servants with those employed on earth to propagate the gospel; for the gospel, "the Testimony of Jesus," was the purpose and spirit of the angelic prophecy, as it was that of the apostolic mission.

St. John seems to have conceived the angel to be our Lord, who had in the commencement of the Apocalypse similarly prophesied to him. The angel's words had been highly authoritative, "Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the supper of the Lamb. These are the true sayings of God." (Ver. 9.) The worship is repeated[66], apparently under the same impression, the angel's language being still more directly authoritative; "Those sayings are faithful and true; and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his ANGEL to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. *Behold I come quickly*, Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy

[66] Apoc. xxii. 6, 7.

of this book." The "Angel of the Lord," was a frequent name of the Messiah; the words, "Behold I come quickly," however spoken in a representative sense, might naturally have suggested the idea that the Lord stood before him; the apostle prostrates himself and worships, but is stopped by the declaration that angel-worship is forbidden. The error may have been divinely permitted for the sake of the precept; one of the most forcible and frequent given in the whole Scripture, yet one of the most fearlessly and idolatrously profaned by the Church of Rome.

Ver. 11. The great execution is now to be done upon Popery. The Lord Christ comes in his glory, followed by the Saints, to destroy the system of the idolatrous religion. This is the fulfilment of the prophecy of Peter[67]. "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up.—Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

[67] 2 Pet. iii. 10. 13.

Ver. 12. Our Lord comes with the splendour of him to whom "all power was given in heaven and in earth." He bears three names. The first is one "that no man knew," a name beyond human conception, his heavenly name. The second, "the Word of God," his name as the mediator, his Scriptural name. The third, "King of kings and Lord of lords," his name as the conqueror of the idolatrous religion, and sovereign of the world, his earthly name. This conjecture is, perhaps, rendered additionally probable by the context. With the first name is mentioned, the "eyes as a flame of fire;" the distinctions of our Lord's presence as Deity [68]. With the second, the "vesture dipped in blood," the sign of his sacrifice; and with the third, the sword that smites the nations, and the iron sceptre with which he crushes all hostility. The triple name also exhibits a strong contrast to the triple title of Rome, as the head of the Papacy [69]. 1. "Mystery," the name that no man knew, derived from some deeper and darker source than man can fathom, the *spiritual* name. 2. "Babylon the Great," the name by which she is symbolized, the Scriptural name. And, 3. The "Mother of harlots and abominations of the earth,"

[68] Apoc. i. 14.

[69] Ib. xvii. 5.

the name expressive of her actual worldly influence, the earthly name.

Ver. 20. The power of God overthrows popery and its adherents, and extinguishes the Papacy in the midst of general ruin.

PROPHECY.

THE THOUSAND YEARS.

CHAPTER XX.

Ver. 1. And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

2. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

3. And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

4. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands: and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

5. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

6. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power,

but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

7. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

8. And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom *is* as the sand of the sea.

9. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

10. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

11. And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away: and there was found no place for them.

12. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

13. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

14. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

15. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire.

INTERPRETATION.

This chapter is so entirely future, and relates to events so much beyond our present comprehension, that it would be at once presumptuous and useless to attempt any detailed elucidation of its solemn and glorious promises. Yet we have no reason to doubt that this part of the prophecy, like all the former, describes real acts of the Divine providence. The outline, at least, is clear, is reconcileable to human reason, and seems to receive striking confirmation from the whole body of prophetic Scripture, from the discourses of our Lord in the Gospels, and from the revelations of the Spirit through the apostolic writers. The chapter declares, that for a long period after the fall of the Papacy, and the utter abolition of the powers by which it was sustained, there shall be a renovated system, in which Christianity shall be the paramount, or the only religion; the Evil Spirit shall be despoiled of the guilty supremacy which he has exercised over the human mind since the Fall; and some signal and pre-eminent display of the favour of God shall distinguish those who died in the faith from the earliest ages of the Church. Their open resurrection, or reunion of soul and body, with some extraordinary and preternatural

addition of power and glory, physical and spiritual, shall mark them out to the wonder of man, and justify the magnificent prophetic promises of the triumph over death, and the restoration of the world.

Ver. 7. But this state shall suffer a brief interruption. The Evil Spirit shall, for purposes concealed in the depths of the future, be again let loose, shall corrupt a portion of the mortal dwellers on the earth, and shall finally, with the guilty, be expelled into the kingdom of darkness for ever. The last judgement shall sit, and sin and death shall be no more.

PROPHECY.

THE CHURCH TRIUMPHANT.

CHAPTER XXI.

Ver. 1. And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

2. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

4. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor

crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

5. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

6. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the begimning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

7. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

8. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.

9. And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

10. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.

11. Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;

12. And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.

13. On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.

14. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

15. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

16. And the city lieth four square, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

17. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

18. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.

19. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;

20. The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

21. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was one of pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

22. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

23. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

24. And the nations of them which are saved shall

walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

25. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

26. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.

27. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life

INTERPRETATION.

Ver. 1. This chapter seems to be a parallelism of the passage [71], in the preceding, which describes the coming happiness of the earth. That "the sea gave up the dead that were in it," does not necessarily imply any contrast in point of *time* with "there was no sea," the former phrase possibly meaning merely that *all* the dead were summoned. The direct reasons for conceiving that this chapter refers only to the earth are,—that the Celestial Church is represented *descending* from Heaven, to complete that final union which had been so long symbolized by Marriage; that this happiness is promised to the people of "the first resurrection;" that the announcement of the sentence of those who had rejected or abandoned the

[71] Apoc. xx. 4, 5, 6.

faith *follows*;—and that, in express contrast to the fall of the Papal Babylon, one of the angels who had inflicted the plagues on her, leads the apostle to contemplate the triumph of the Church; an earthly punishment being contrasted with an earthly triumph; though the earth may be but the earlier place of a happiness which is declared to be, like those to whom it is given, immortal.

Ver. 10. The splendour and costliness of precious stones is used to express the glory and indescribable beauty of the new state of the Church. That splendour, which no human imagination can adequately conceive, is to be approached only by accumulating, as the vision has done, images of the highest earthly lustre and value. The glory of God had been already figured by gems[72]. The Vision seems to imply that a glory like his own shall irradiate the Church that he has saved.

PROPHECY.

THE CHURCH TRIUMPHANT.

CHAPTER XXII.

Ver. 1. And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

2. In the midst of the treet of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare

[72] Apoc. iv.

twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

3. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

4. And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

5. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

6. And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

7. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

8. And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.

9. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.

10. And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

11. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

12. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

13. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

14. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

15. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

16. I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

17. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

18. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

19. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

20. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly; Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

21. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

INTERPRETATION.

The description of the triumphant Church has now been given. The triumph is that of the thousand years, which, in the announcement of the final fall of the Papacy, was predicted to be at hand. The angel had there declared that the "marriage of the Lamb *was come*[73]." The present description is that of the Bride. "Come hither, I will shew thee the Bride[74]." The marriage, or intimate union of the Church with Christ in his manifest glory and sovereignty, is therefore antecedent to the second, or general resurrection; an event which is to be rapidly followed by the close of the great mediatorial system, the giving up of the kingdom by Jesus as the Messiah, and his resumption of the glory which he had with the Father and the Spirit, before the world was. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father[75]." The kingdom of Christ is prophesied in the ancient Scriptures to be everlasting. And such it shall be, but under the sway of its Lord, resuming his original grandeur, after having triumphed over death and Satan, upon the spot of their supremacy; and

[73] Apoc. xix. 7. [74] Ibid. xxi. 9. [75] 1 Cor. xv. 24.

rescued from the double grave an innumerable host to be the the inheritors of glory for ever.

Ver. 8. The Apostle, hearing words which were the very oracles of God, once again conceives the angel to be the Lord; and, as has been already observed, worships under the error. The angel, without rebuke, again discloses his subordinate rank, and having thus guarded against misconception, proceeds to speak in the person of Jesus. "I am Alpha and Omega."

Ver. 11. "He that is unjust let him be unjust still." An ancient phrase for the condemnation of the self-willed. As in Ezekiel. "Thus saith the Lord God, He that heareth, let him hear, and he that forbeareth, let him forbear; for they are a rebellious house[76]." The warning of prophecy has been given; the mercy of God has been offered; if men will not receive it, the crime is their own. The unspeakable blessing of immortal happiness is offered freely, and offered to all who feel a wish for it. "Let him that heareth, say, Come. And let him that is athirst, say, Come."

Ver. 18. The angel prohibits under the strongest malediction all attempts to falsify or add to the Apocalypse on pretence of a new pro-

[76] Ezek. iii. 27.

phecy,—a command rendered necessary by the practice of the Gnostic and other heretical writers in the early ages; Apocalypses having been forged under the names of several of the Apostles; they, however, were soon detected, and perished.

Ver. 20. The angel had already commanded (ver. 10.) that the prophecy should not be sealed, or shut up, for the time of its commencement was at hand. He now, at the close, as if to give peculiar force to the impression of its nearness, repeats the warning. "*Surely*, I come *quickly*." The immediate visitation reverts to the seven Churches, there being no other reference to them since the original Vision [77].

"I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the *Churches*." (ver. 16.) St. John, being the Apostle of the Asiatic Church, is made the depository of the warning of the Roman persecution. He receives it with holy obedience. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus," and transmits it with the Apostolic blessing to his people. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

[77] Apoc. i. ii. iii.

END OF THE APOCALYPSE.

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.

In this rapid view of Christian history, all discussion of doctrines is avoided as much as possible; the purpose of the sketch being merely to mark the principal facts, and their connexion.

The great characteristic of the Church of God in the Apocalypse is, that it shall be a PERSECUTED RELIGION. It is predicted, that there shall be a false Church, the perpetual enemy of the true, which shall be constantly the inferior in power and popular name, and shall be constantly liable to the sword, until the period of a mighty and universal consummation; when the ways of God shall be justified by the ruin of the oppressor, and the full and magnificent triumph of Christianity.

This characteristic had been already declared by our Saviour and the Apostles,

John xv. 20. "Remember the word that I said unto you. The servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you. (Ver. 21.) But all those

things will they do unto you for my name's sake; because they know not him that sent me."

Matthew v. 10. "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for their's is the kingdom of Heaven. (Ver. 11.) Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Chap. xxiii. 34. "Wherefore I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them you shall *kill and crucify;* and some of them shall ye *scourge* in your synagogues, and *persecute* them from city to city."

Chap. xxiv. 9. "Then shall they deliver you up to be *afflicted, and shall kill* you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake."

We find this prediction of our Saviour sustained by the whole experience of the Church. St. Paul, nearly thirty years after, and towards the close of his course, gives this vivid picture of suffering. "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed[1]!"

The conviction, that the state of the true Church was to be one of struggle till the end,

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9.

amounted to a maxim. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus *shall suffer persecution*[2]." The Apostle goes even further, and distinctly points out a crisis when the sincerity and strength of the faith would be put to the test by public and remarkable sufferings. "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for THE DAY shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and *the fire shall try* every man's work, of what sort it is[3]."

St. Peter, in the same spirit and experience, prepares the Church for an immediate and public persecution, and declares it to be the natural inheritance of the followers of our Lord.

1 Peter iv. 12. "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the *fiery trial* which is to *try you*, as though some strange thing happened unto you. (Ver. 13.) But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. (Ver. 16.) If any man *suffer as a Christian*, let him not be ashamed. (Ver. 17.) For the time *is come* that *judgment must begin* at the *house of God:* And if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God? (Ver. 19.) Wherefore let *them that suffer*, according to the will of God, commit the

[2] 2 Tim. iii. 12. [3] 1 Cor. iii. 13.

keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator!

It might be thought that those trials were merely incident to the first state of all great innovations. But then stands forth the mysterious splendour of the Apocalypse, like an archangel covered with his own wings, and shews the principle prolonged through age on age, the spirit of violence and bloodshed paramount until the hour of its destined overthrow by the visible hand of Heaven.

THE JEWS.

The first persecutors of Christianity were the Jews. The fear that the new dispensation would supersede their law; and the sublime boldness of the Apostles, who openly charged them with the death of our Lord as a sacrilegious murder, stirred the Sanhedrim to vengeance. Three distinguished servants of the Faith, Stephen, James the son of Zebedee, and James the Just, head of the Church of Jerusalem, were slain, and the Church was altogether dispersed, excepting the Apostles[5].

The scattered Disciples were still pursued. Messengers were sent by the High Priest to the

[5] Acts viii. 1.

Jews living out of Palestine to persecute; and they were represented to the proverbial jealousy of Rome as rebels, impatient of her government, and acknowledging an alien and self-elected sovereign [6].

The Heathen history of those times is imperfect. But it is impossible to doubt that the calumnies of a people, dwelling in every part of the empire, habitually dextrous, and on whom prejudice seems to fix a more inveterate grasp than on any other among mankind, must have prepared their imperial masters for violence against Christianity. The occasion suddenly occurred, and the terrible course of Pagan persecution began.

In the 10th year of Nero, and two years before the commencement of the final war of the Jews, Rome was almost burned to the ground. Of the fourteen quarters of the city, but four remained; multitudes perished. The suspicions of the people were fixed upon the Emperor; and, as the historian remarks, they might be well entitled to charge any atrocity upon the notorious murderer of his mother and his wife [7]. To avert his danger, Nero threw the crime upon the Christians, already obnoxious to Pa-

[6] Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. ch. i.

[7] Gibbon, c. xvi.

ganism, and amounting to a "great multitude" in Rome.

Tacitus, almost a contemporary, describes their deaths as combining all the forms of horror. "They died in torments, and their torments were embittered by insult and derision. Some were nailed to crosses; others were sewn up in the skins of wild beasts, and exposed to the fury of dogs; others, again, smeared over with combustible materials, were used as torches to illuminate the darkness of the night.

"The gardens of Nero were destined for the melancholy spectacle, which was accompanied with a horse race, and honoured with the presence of the Emperor, who mingled among the populace in the dress and attitudes of a charioteer[8]."

The agonies of the sacrifice overwhelmed even the national ferocity of the Romans. "The public abhorrence was changed into commiseration, as the opinion grew that those unhappy wretches were sacrificed, not so much to the public welfare, as to the cruelty of a jealous tyrant[9]."

[8] Tacitus Ann. 15.

[9] This abhorrence arose from an opinion that the Christians were united in a hatred of the human race. "Odio humani generis conjuncti." Calumny had done its work. Gibbon

This was the act of an acknowledged lover of blood. But it is too high an honour to the spirit of Paganism to doubt that it was in principle a persecutor. The Pagan, accustomed to the sight of a multitude of idols, might, in general, feel no keen alarm at the increase of their number by the contributions of Egypt or Asia. The line drawn between the ancient idolatries was no abrupt and frowning barrier. The Roman eye saw the religions of the world, like its territory, spread out, an easy level to Roman conquest and association; the same powers of nature, the same poetic fable, often the same heroes, made the mythology of the subject and the master; and the religion of Rome followed the example of its polity, and gave the rights of citizenship to the stranger.

But the spirit only slumbered. It was living in the laws of all Paganism. The introduction of "strange gods" was a matter of public vigilance. The temples of foreign idolaters were sometimes plundered and overthrown; new opinions were visited with the severity of the state. "It is difficult," says Plato, "to attain, and *danger-*

slowly inclines to the reading of "conjuncti" for "convicti." But the text "Haud perinde *in* crimine, quam odio humani generis," &c. might have assisted him.

cus to publish the knowledge of the true God[10]." In Greece, the fount of religious law to the ancient world, the name of Atheist, or dissident from the popular worship, was ruinous. The fate of Socrates is proverbial.—The Athenians burned the books of Protagoras[11].—St. Paul was brought before the Areopagus for preaching "strange gods[12]."—Josephus charges the Athenians with merciless severity to those who spoke against their national faith[13].—In the conference between Augustus, Agrippa, and Mæcenas, described by Dion Cassius, Mæcenas declares the received opinion of the sovereign's duty. "Do thou thyself worship the gods, strictly in *the manner* of *the country*, and *compel others* to do so; but those who bring in strange practices in those things, hate and punish[14]."

Judæism, for ages a living testimony against heathenism, had yet seldom attracted persecution; but the essential adaptation of its law to a peculiar people, and its rigid and hermit-like remoteness from general intercourse, had rendered it an object rather of scorn than of alarm. Few

[10] Gibbon, c. xvi.

[11] Suidas in voce.

[12] Acts xvii. 19.

[13] C. App. l. ii. c. xxxvii.

[14] Το μεν θειον παντη παντως αυτος σεβου, κατα τα πατρια, και τους αλλους αναγκαζε, τους δε ξενιζοντας περι αυτο μισει και κολαζε. Lib. lii.

things in ancient history are more remarkable than the slight impression made upon the manners or learning of Greece and Rome by Judæism[15]; easy of access as were its Scriptures; close as Judæa was to Europe; curious and magnificent as were its sacred customs and worship; and profound, philosophical, and splendid as was the spirit of its laws, its religion, and its language. The storm, that was to sweep away paganism, gathered in Judæa; but it hung there, like the storm of the prophet, "a cloud no bigger than a man's hand." It came with Christianity, suddenly covered the horizon, and at once fixed every eye of the pagan world in wrath or terror.

Judæism and paganism were hostile powers kept from conflict by a great intermediate desert; Christianity and paganism were hostile powers *standing* upon the same soil, and committed by their nature in a struggle which was to end but by the extinction of either. There was an utter incapability of alliance between them. The idols, the pompous and mystic ce-

[15] The feeble traces of Jewish intercourse are scarcely discoverable in a few practices of the early Greeks, in the dreams of Plato, and perhaps in the poetry of Virgil. See Dr. Gray's learned and elegant work on the "Connection of Sacred and Profane Literature."

remonial, the still darker practices of the heathen worship, were all profanation to the Christian. The converts shrank from them, the apostles denounced them as things irrational, criminal, and devoted to speedy ruin. But idolatry was still upon the throne; and the whole rage of a despotic government alarmed by the novelty of resistance; the frenzy of a powerful and superstitious priesthood inflamed by the open revolt from its ritual; and the headlong self-interest of the thousands and tens of thousands dependant on the costly expenditure of the temples; rolled in one fiery stream of persecution against the people of God.

A.D. 68. The first persecution closed only with the death of Nero. The slaughter which had shocked even Rome, accustomed as it was to the gladiatorial shows, lasted four years. It has been idly doubted whether this suffering extended beyond the city [16]. The popular mind was already infuriated. There must have been multitudes who waited only for the imperial nod to strike down the Church. When Nero held games and drove his chariot by the light of the burning Christians, the populace in the remote and half barbarian dependencies must have claimed their

[16] Dodwell. Diss. Cyprian.

privilege of imitating the master of the empire. Christianity once branded in Rome must have borne its mark for popular contumely wherever it wandered through the Roman world.

A.D. 96. During the brief interval between the death of Nero and the last year of Domitian, the Church enjoyed comparative peace. The Jews, her sleepless persecutors, had been stricken down by the long threatened vengeance, and were now an outcast people. Even the proverbial cruelty of Domitian was too busy with senatorial slaughter to have leisure for the pursuit of peasant blood. But he was at last roused by the rumour that his throne was to be seized by some new sovereign, of the kindred of our Lord. Persecution instantly burst out; but, after a year's continuance, it subsided on the death of the tyrant. In the former persecution, St. Peter and St. Paul are presumed to have been slain. In this, St. John was banished to Patmos, where the Apocalypse was given.

A.D. 98. The death of Nerva, the successor of Domitian, gave the throne to Trajan, a brave soldier, and a vigorous king, but infected with the double prejudices of the Roman and the Idolater. Popular violence had continued to disturb the Church in the provinces, and when the younger Pliny was, in the third year of Trajan,

sent as pro-consul to Asia, he found it the object of general severity. His celebrated letter gives equal proof of the innocence of the Christians, the fury of their enemies, and the singular ignorance of even the most philosophic and enquiring Romans on the Christian doctrines. Trajan's answer to the letter established the law for the empire:—"That the Christians were not to be *officiously sought after*, but that such as were *accused* and *convicted* of an *adherence to Christianity* were to be *put to death* as *wicked* citizens, if they did not return to the religion of their ancestors." Such was the legislation of paganism. It is clear that this law left the Christians exposed to the most extensive and continued suffering. It made the mere profession of Christianity a crime. It opened the power of accusing to all, and it left no alternative but apostacy or death.

The Asiatic Churches, powerful and distinguished from the beginning, had, in a few years, become almost the only establishment of Christianity. The Church in Jerusalem had been scattered in the general ruin of the Jews. The Church in Rome had been broken down by the persecution under Nero. The little Christian communities, dispersed at wide intervals through the empire, carried on their solitary work of ho-

liness almost unknown. Asia, the greatest of all the provinces, and at length the favoured seat of the Emperors, exhibited the faith in its grandeur. Through the whole period of future persecution, the weight of the storm was turned upon Asia. The feebler and more distant communities felt the visitation from age to age, but on Asia fell the perpetual thunder.

The decree of Trajan was the first direct and formal rule, the statute against Christianity. It was made the principle of all legislation on the subject of the Church; and, however modified by the character of successive sovereigns, it established persecution as the law of the empire, A.D. 303. This law continued during two centuries. The violence of paganism had alternately burst out and subsided, like the flashes of a great conflagration, broader or feebler from time to time, but continually burning. The name of Christian was, throughout the whole period, a source of hazard, often of plunder, often of death. The habitual heathen love of blood, the proverbial avarice of the Roman governors, the personal revenge of individuals, the roused and merciless jealousy of the Pagan priesthood, were principles that no moderation of the Emperors could have extinguished. But, when a tyrant or a bigot ascended the throne, he found in

them an exhaustless and wild power of desolation. Multitudes of Christians had been sacrificed; their noblest leaders, their wise, their pure, their aged, had been, from year to year, flung into a dishonoured grave before their eyes; matrons and maidens had been tortured in the midst of barbarian riot, and the haughty and insulting scandals of the officials of Rome; no Christian could be secure of his property, his freedom, or his life, beyond the hour. In this tremendous struggle the Church was not destroyed, but it was deeply bruised and wounded, and nothing but the hand, which touched the dead and they arose, could have sustained it in that day of terror. What deeper earthly misery can there be than that of a condition in which every man might be an accuser, and every accuser carried death upon his lips!—where the whole power of a great public body, including the first ranks of the empire, was sullenly fixed on blood; where the empire was a despotism, in the hands of a fool or a madman, himself in the hands of a profligate and fierce soldiery, who hurried despot after despot up the steps of the throne, to fling them from it with the rapidity of criminals from the scaffold; and where the perpetual cloud of burning and massacre, that hung over Rome, threw its broad coverture over the rapines and cruelties of governors and people to the borders of the empire. Within one hun-

dred and forty-three years, from the death of Antoninus the philosopher to the accession of Constantine, Rome saw no less than thirty-eight Emperors and partners of the empire, almost the entire of whom were slain in popular convulsions, or rebellions of the soldiery. The whole ponderous fabric of the state had been for ages tumbling beam by beam; and what must have been the sufferings of those sure to be stricken down, whoever escaped, and with no hope of exemption from public fury, but in the sweeping ruin, which left all alike sufferers, naked to every wind of Heaven, exiles or slaves, without an altar, and without a country!

A.D. 303. A great prophetic change was at hand. Paganism was to be uncrowned, but it was to make a last desperate effort for dominion. The division of the imperial authority between the two Augusti, Diocletian and Maximian Herculeus, and the two Cæsars, Constantius Chlorus and Maximinus Galerius divided the councils of the empire, and overpowered the feeble or fictitious humanity of Diocletian. The progress of the faith stirred up the last paroxysm of expiring Paganism. The sovereigns Maximian and Galerius, ferocious soldiers, and owing their elevation to the sword[17], had already been secret

[17] Gibbon, c. xvi.

persecutors in their camps and palaces. The superstition of the mother of Galerius [18]; the insolence of the tyrant himself, inflated by recent Persian victory; the artifices of the priesthood, dreading the rapid extinction of their shrines; and the cold and infirm nature of Diocletian, perhaps alarmed at the growing multitude of the Christians; had worked together, until the whole vengeance exploded in one burst of popular, kingly, and military persecution.

The 23d of February of the year 303, the day of the festival of the Terminalia, was appointed for levelling to the ground the principal Church of Nicomedia, the imperial residence. On the next day, the "General Decree" of persecution was issued, commanding the instant demolition of all the Christian places of worship,—the death of all who dared to worship,—the delivery of the Scriptures to be burned,—the confiscation of all property belonging to the Churches,—the acceptance by the tribunals of every charge brought against a Christian,—the refusal of every complaint brought by a Christian,—and, finally, the exclusion of the whole body from the protection of the law!

[18] Described by Lactantius as "Deorum montium cultrix, mulier admodum superstitiosa." Gibbon, c. xvi.

This terrible denunciation, which could scarcely have been justified against rebels in arms, did not break down the sacred fortitude of the Christians. The decree had been fixed up in the most public place of Nicomedia; it was openly torn down by a Christian, who loudly expressed, at the same moment, his scorn and horror of its rash and blinded tyranny. His offence was accounted treason, and he was burned alive by a slow fire, exhibiting in his tortures, and amid the taunts of his Pagan murderers, the inextinguishable courage of conscience. The Christians, while they lamented his bold imprudence, yet applauded his magnanimity, and their applauses struck terror to the heart of Diocletian.

To rouse his tardy spirit, his palace was twice set on fire by the contrivance of Galerius [19]. The Christians were massacred as the incendiaries. Their casual resistance in the provinces was magnified into revolt; and extermination was proclaimed by three edicts of successive and deepening atrocity. By the first, the bishops and priests were cast into prison. By the second, torture was enjoined to force them to sacrifice to the idols. By the third, the whole Christian people were to be driven to idol worship, under

[19] Lactantius, quoted by Mosheim.

the penalty of death. This unspeakable trial was endured for six years, when Galerius, already, by the retirement of Diocletian, lord of the whole empire, excepting Gaul and Britain, was seized with a mortal disease. The unconquerable patience of the Church, policy, and perhaps the terror of approaching death, wrought upon his mind; an imperial rescript appeared, commanding that "clemency should be extended to the Christians, and that they should be suffered to meet in their worship without molestation." The edict closed with the hope "that this indulgence would engage the Christians to offer up their prayers to the Deity whom they adored, for the safety and prosperity of the Emperor, of themselves, and of the republic[20]." A memorable confession wrung from the dying lips of doubt and fear.

In the Roman world there had been but one refuge for the Church. Constantius, the Governor of Gaul and Britain, had refused to imbrue his hands in innocent blood. But the day of retribution was come. In defiance of the Emperor, the troops of Gaul had saluted Constantine, the son of Constantius, successor to the throne. The rival Cæsars plunged into war. After twelve years of battle, in which the blood of the savage

[20] Gibbon, c. xvi.

and licentious armies of Rome was poured out like water, Constantine triumphed. The persecution was, by the joint edict of Constantine and Licinius, solemnly extinguished in the year 313. In the eleventh year after, Constantine, by the defeat and death of Licinius, sat sole lord of the civilized world.

A.D. 324. The path of Providence is in clouds. The historian's eye is seldom suffered to see more than the results of that great agency by which the changes of nations are wrought; like the changes of the elements, their causes are hid in an upper region of grandeur and mystery beyond the reach of man. But Scripture sometimes gives the nobler privilege of penetrating beyond those clouds, and seeing the shapes and principles of events before they descend to man. The acknowledgment of Christianity by Constantine, might have seemed the promise of a boundless period of Roman prosperity. It had conciliated a vast multitude of faithful and high-minded subjects, whose gratitude to the Emperor, and whose conscientious obedience to authority, made them pillars of the state. The death of the last rival of Constantine had sealed the peace of the empire. Rome was once more the undisputed queen of nations. But, in that hour of elevation and splendour, she had been

raised to the edge of a precipice. Her next step was to be downwards and irrecoverable.

The change of the government to Constantinople, still perplexes the historian. It was an act in direct repugnance to the whole course of the ancient and honourable prejudices of the Roman mind. It was the work of no luxurious Asiatic, devoted to the indulgences of eastern customs and climates; but of an iron conqueror, born in the west, and contemptuous, like all Romans, of the habits of the orientals. It was the work of a keen politician, yet was impolitic in the most palpable degree; it was the work of a bold and sagacious chieftain, who knew the infinite hazards of Italy, and who had seen the rising of that very inundation of barbarism, before which the northern and western barriers of the empire were so soon to melt away. Yet Constantine abandoned Rome, the great citadel and throne of the Cæsars, for an obscure corner of Thrace; and expended the remainder of his vigorous and ambitious life in the double toil of raising a colony into the capital of empire, and degrading the capital into the feeble honours and humiliated strength of a colony.

For this there is one solution, and but one. Rome was purple with the blood of the people of God. Three hundred years of the sufferings

of Christianity were to be at length repaid. It is no superstition, but a most solemn and authentic truth that, on every nation which has shed that blood, it has been, and shall be avenged. The purpose of the Roman greatness was done; the earth had been given to one sceptre, for the surer and more comprehensive diffusion of Christianity. The reduction of the civilized world had spread knowledge, laws, habits of obedience, an universal language. The golden weight of the Roman chariot wheel, had in its triumph gone on levelling the road for the naked feet of the Gospel.

But the persecution of the faith had covered Rome with crime; and, in the instant when the Church was to be free, the punishment began. The first act of Constantine had been to lay the foundations of the new Rome; in six years after, A.D. 330, he declared it the seat of Empire, and thenceforth the west was given over to all the various work of ruin; to the extortions of viceroys, to popular feuds, to religious discord, all to be consummated in the invasion of the northern tribes, that drowned the land, like the overflowings of the ocean.

Christianity was at length upon the throne. But Paganism had been too long embodied in the national customs, was too tempting to the

sensual nature of the popular mind, and was too congenial to the bewildered philosophy of the ancient world, to be easily destroyed. Julian, the nephew of Constantine, A.D. 361, had the evil merit of retarding its fall. The Apostate restored the heathen temples, and laboured, with the keenest artifice, to abolish Christianity. But the Church was invincible; Julian was slain in the rash invasion of Persia; and his reign of twenty months was the last attempt to restore the name of Paganism.

A.D. 379. The triumph of Christianity was come. Theodosius, a statesman, a soldier, and a man of virtue, was called from obscurity to the empire. The lingering reluctance of the throne to repress the ancient superstition, was instantly changed for a wise and bold activity. A succession of decrees, like successive flashes of light from the sword of the Spirit, smote the worship of the idols, shut the Heathen temples, and established Christianity the religion of the Roman world. Thus fell Paganism; the great antagonist of truth, purity, and wisdom; the pamperer of human passion, and pride; splendid and stately to the eye, but made to be the oppressor and the murderer. At this distance the mind still contemplates it, like the ruins of one of its own temples, and, wondering at its stupen-

dous extent, the depth and age of its foundation, the grandeur and costliness of the embellishment lavished upon it by the genius of antiquity, may well doubt that it was either raised or overthrown by the strength of man. But it was the house of darkness; vice and blood were the offerings on its altars; its fall was the freedom of nations, the beginning of a day which shall know no end; and loud and lofty be the thanksgiving for that fall which let in light upon mankind.

The infidel historian [19] acknowledges the singularity and completeness of this ruin. He had already laboured to prove that the progress of Christianity was accountable on natural grounds. His proof failed; for nothing lower than the mind of Heaven could have conceived Christianity in the darkness of heathenism; and nothing feebler than the Divine arm could have upborne it in the tyranny of Rome. But of the five Causes which he alleged, the substance is not far from the truth. Christianity was made to impress the human understanding. Its generous and lofty principles were congenial to all that was still unstained in the human heart. And what was this congeniality, but the additional evi-

[19] Gibbon, Ch. xxviii.

dence that it was the work of God. Providence makes no ostentation of power. Where its will can be done by the common order of things, it expends no miracle. The glorious birth is the work of Heaven, but the infant is thenceforth delivered to the ordinary care of man. The moral sun is commanded to start into light, and lighten the universe, but he is sent on his course, to be borne along by the grand general laws of nature.

No conformity of circumstance can account for the *origin* of Christianity.

A Being, known to the world only as a Jewish peasant, delivered a system of doctrine, which overthrew not merely some feeble philosophy, or some harsh and unpopular superstition, but both theory and establishment of the State Religion, guarded and fought for by the armed strength of the most powerful government of the greatest of all empires. Thousands and tens of thousands owed their daily bread to their connexion with that religion. Millions on millions had identified it with all their conceptions of life, of enjoyment, and of that obscure hope in which the heathen saw a life to come. The noble families owed to it a large portion of their rank and influence. The Emperor himself was the High Priest. Old tradition, invigorated into

living belief, made it the pledge of safety to the empire,—a sacred protector, without which the glories of Roman dominion were destined to inevitable ruin. Yet against this colossal and haughty erection,—the consummate work of subtlety and strength,—stood forth a solitary Being, and at his word the whole pile, the great fortress that towered up to Heaven, came, wall and gate, to the ground. And by what means had this been done? By nothing that can find a parallel in the history of human impulse! Signal austerity, enthusiasm, wealth, military genius, the promise of splendid success, visionary doctrines, the displays of a sensual paradise, have made proselytes in barbarous ages, or among the loose creeds of contending heresies. But the founder of Christianity cast away all those weapons of our lower nature. He shrank from no declaration of the most unpalatable truth. He told the Jew that his spiritual pride was a deadly crime. He declared that the cherished impurity of the Gentile was a deadly crime. He plucked up the temporal ambition of his followers by the roots, and told them, that if they were to be great, it must be through the grave. In the full view of unpopularity, desertion, and death, he pronounced to the Jews the extinction of their national existence; to the

disciples, their lives of persecution. At the time of his death, his name had scarcely passed beyond his despised province; and when it at length reached Rome, it was known only in contemptuous connection with that of a crowd of unfortunate men, condemned to the rack and the flame. Yet, within the life of man, his religion constituted the worship of Emperor and people, his doctrines were acknowledged as inspiration, and the civilized world bowed down before him as the God whom the Heaven and the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain.

Those wonders are familiar to the Christian, but they are still wonders, the mightiest phenomena on which the spirit of man can gaze, the stars of our mortal twilight, and worthy of our loftiest admiration, till the gates of the grave shall be unbarred, and the vision of glory shall spread before us without a cloud.

A.D. 388. The destruction of Paganism was not left to the gradual and obscure work of time. It was made a great public act. In the senate, Theodosius put the question to the vote, "Whether the Worship of Christ or of Jupiter should be the religion of the Romans." The old idolatry was sentenced. The subsequent conduct of the Christian Emperor shows the noble superiority of Christian principle. Armed as he was, with

unlimited power, and often offended by the stubborn prejudices of the Pagan, he yet kept his hands pure from persecution. Distinguishing between the misguided people and the misguiding religion, he laid no infliction on the former, while on the latter he pressed with the vigour of justified authority. He even received some of the more eminent Pagans into his confidence, while he firmly commanded the closing of the temples.

But the victory of Christianity can scarcely be estimated, but by knowing the power of the hostile establishment. The ancient religions of the Heathen had for their main object the support not of doctrine but of power. The religions of the East were chiefly political, and devised to strengthen the sovereign. Those of the West were chiefly military, and devised to animate the warlike prowess of the nation. The religion of Rome, adopting the genius of both, but born in a later age, rapidly found the importance of combining its interests with those of the higher ranks. There is no instance on record of a religion so strongly imbedded in the passions, prospects, and general influence of a government and nobility. In the Christian establishments, the Church justly desires that natural protection which belongs to an alliance with the opulent and powerful of the state. But to this con-

nection there is a simple, yet impassable boundary. The Cleric is a separated man; he abandons the whole field of that stirring and brilliant career which dazzles the eye of the young, the ambitious, and the high born. He cannot gather, and he must not even desire to put forth his hand into the harvest of such laurels as are to be won by martial or political renown.

But in Rome the connection was at once of the most extensive, and the most intimate nature. The noble might be a priest, without relinquishing the sternest prizes of ambition. He might on one day lead the procession to the temple of Jove as a pontiff, and on the next as a consul and a conqueror. Emolument, influence, the sanctity attached to the official rank, all attached the nobles to the Pagan establishment. There was no worldly penalty to repel the union. The ensigns of political power were not to be laid down by the hand that took up the Augural staff; the armour might be worn under the sacrificial robe. The bloodshed of civil war, the ambition which usurped the state, even the deepest excesses of the luxury of Rome, were not incompatible with the exercise of the priesthood, by the long succession of fierce rivals for the throne.

The numbers and accurate subordination of

the Pagan Hierarchy rendered it, above all others, capable of combining with the passions of a nobility, struggling for popular honours. The rank of the Chief Pontiff was for life. Augustus, when he had stripped Lepidus of all other distinctions, yet would not venture to outrage public opinion so far as to deprive him of the pontificate [20]. And the power of this priest was worthy of all but imperial envy. He commanded the whole religious Ministry. He appointed all the high priests of the various deities, the vestals, the formularies of religion. In conjunction with the College of Pontiffs, originally formed of his secretaries, he ruled the calendar, the adoption of children, and matrimonial causes; the two latter constituting a highly important portion of the jurisprudence of Rome [21].

Next in consideration, were the sixteen Augurs. Their office was the idle one of observing omens, the signs of the skies, the flight of birds, &c. But this trifling included the material of great public power. The Augur hostile to the newly elected Consul could drive him from the ivory chair, by the simple declaration that the heavens were unpropitious [22]. This formidable

[20] Dio. lib. xxxvii.

[21] Beaufort. De la Republique Romaine, vol. i. Moyle, vol. i.

[22] Plutarch in Marcello.

influence rendered a seat in the college of Augurs of the highest importance to all who contemplated the high offices of the state. Originally the candidate was proposed by the college, and elected by the people. But, under the Empire, the power was too menacing to be intrusted to chance, and the Emperors assumed the first rank, and the election.

The *Quindecim viri*, the guardians of the Sybilline books, and general inspectors of the sacrifices, held the next, a scarcely less important, rank. The Sybilline books had been burned in the year of Rome 670. But new collections had been formed by order of the senate, and on the college of fifteen devolved the duty of their interpretation. In an age, when an oracle determined a war, or a sacrifice decided the fate of a kingdom, the power of the fifteen was formidable. The rank was solicited by men of the first eminence.

Those chief colleges were followed by a crowd of powerful subordinates.

The seven Epulones, superintendants of the feast of Jove.

The Arvales, superintendants of rural sacrifices.

The Sodales Tatienses, established by Romulus.

The Salii, or priests of Mars.

The Fabians, the Julians, the Quinctilians, the Panites, religious brotherhoods all possessing extensive public influence.

The college of the twenty Feciales, who superintended the declarations of war.

The fifteen Flamens, who superintended severally the worship of the principal deities, Jupiter, Mars, &c.

All those classes reckoned among their members the leading men of the state. We have an inscription of the Emperor Tiberius, in which he bears the titles of Chief Pontiff, Augur, Quindecimvir, and Epulo. Cæsar, Crassus, and Augustus, were Chief Pontiffs. Scipio Africanus was one of the Salians. Marc Antony was a Julian, and had officiated as a priest in the Lupercalia [23]. This brotherhood was chiefly composed of the young nobles. Dolabella was a Septemvir Epulo, and a Tatian. The Feciales were chosen from the first families. Among the Flamens, the high priest of Jupiter had a seat in the senate.

The Aruspices, though of a lower rank than the Augurs, were yet sufficiently high to be occasionally senators [24].

Besides those officers, there were a vast num-

[23] Philipp. II. [24] Cic. ad Familiares.

ber of individuals employed in the pompous ceremonial of Rome, and all, either in person, or by patronage, connected with the nobles. Rome was divided into thirty curiæ, each of which had its priest, and at the head of the thirty, was a chief priest, generally a noble, and always a man of public consideration. Subordinate to those was a host of priests, officers, sacrificers, and attendants, forming a large and strongly compacted corporate influence in Rome, and throughout the Empire.

Thus the priesthood of ancient Rome was cemented into the state. The nobility, instead of looking with envy at its wealth, with contempt at its pacific pursuits, or with hostility at its power, felt an interest in the security of the great hierarchy, in whose honours they were to possess the principal share, and in whose strength was to consist so large a portion of their own. Yet this vast and solid establishment was to vanish like a dream; the gigantic growth of policy and power, rooted in the very centre of the Roman constitution, shooting its fibres through every corner of the Empire, and towering to a height and expansion beneath which all the other idolatries were at once sheltered and thrown into eclipse, was to be smitten into dust, almost without an effort. No human violence

was to intervene, no blow from axe or sword red with innocent blood, no popular frenzy, no penal fire; like the barren fig-tree, it was to be withered to the ground, at the miracle of the Word.

THE BARBARIAN INVASIONS.

"And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see.

"And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given unto him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword [25]."

A great prophetic change was at hand. The dominion of Rome was to pass away. The work, for which the world had been subdued before her, was done in the establishment of Christianity; and the long career of idolatry and blood was now to be stricken by utter ruin.

To a man who looked on the world with a merely human eye, the most magnificent promise of perpetual strength and growing dominion was to be seen in the laws, the manners, the warlike spirit, and the hereditary civilization of Rome. Rising from the condition of a colony

[25] Apoc. vi. 3, 4.

she had fought her way into the sovereignty of the proudest empire that was ever given to human controul; and the conquest was achieved not by those lucky accidents that sometimes lift incapacity into sudden eminence, but by the real and resistless superiority of arts and arms. Asiatic conquerors had subdued more extensive space; but their conquests were over barbarians. They were fierce, rapid, and fruitless. Their chariot wheels ploughed the sand. They came like the whirlwind, and passed like the whirlwind. The Roman conquests were over the civilized world; their evidence was no wrecked and ravaged land, no rude encampment, or licentious possession by soldiery; but a solid connexion with the ancient authority of Roman laws, privileges, and literature. Where civilization already existed, it was converted into Roman civilization; where Barbarism had usurped the soil, it was driven back into the wilderness, or coerced with a strong hand into salutary submission. Where the Roman marched, he filled the land with the temples, theatres, and palaces of his own matchless country. He raised round himself the noble remembrances and images, and filled them with the spirit of Rome. Thus the vigour of the dominion grew with its extent, till the sitter on the throne, issuing his commands to an

Empire stretching from the Euphrates to the Atlantic, and from the wall of Antoninus to the tropic of Cancer, could be answered through the whole of that stupendous circle of power by Roman colonies, bound to their country by citizenship, by a common language, and by a proud and unbroken inheritance of customs, rights, and laws. The dominion was a tyranny, and unfitted alike for the endurance of later European nations, and for the diffusion of those high principles which make the security and the civilization of our time. But it was of all tyrannies the most illustrious; permanency of dominion seemed to be the principle of its power; and we may well forgive the human oracle which pronounced the capitol the centre of an eternal Empire.

But the sceptre was now to be broken. Trajan had advanced the boundaries of the Roman territory to the fated limit. From the time of his death, the strength of the barbarian nations was felt pressing upon their barrier; and the rude bravery, the athletic frame, and the endless multitude of those sons of the storm and the desert, must have often filled the mind of the patriot and the statesman with gloomy forebodings. But the decree had not yet gone forth. The vigour and discipline that still survived in the Roman

armies might justly scorn the divided councils and naked valour of savages; and the chief part of the early invasions ended in the slavery or massacre of the invaders.

The Emperor Theodosius was scarcely in his grave, when this period of victorious, though troubled, supremacy was at an end. In the winter of the year in which he died, the Gothic nations, as one man, rose in arms. Headed by Alaric, a name that still stands in the foremost rank of barbarian courage and devastation, they crossed the Danube, and rushed down upon Constantinople. But their true summons was to the havoc of the Western Empire. From Constantinople, whose battlements defied the attack of a roving enemy, their march turned to Greece. The beauty of that land of the temple and the trophy, which, even under all the inflictions of sterner barbarians than the troops of Alaric, still gives some image of its ancient loveliness and grandeur, was instantly wasted under the hoofs of the Scythian cavalry. Terror went before them; the mountain passes were deserted; and in the midst of universal flight and despair, the conquerors plunged into the Peloponnesus. There they first met the troops of Rome. A series of obscure, yet bloody conflicts followed, which had already overspread the rich-

est portion of the peninsula with the wreck of Goth and Roman; when Alaric, determined to strike at the heart, sprang upon Italy.

A.D. 406. But while this stream of destruction, at length, like a river charged with corpses, checked its speed; another still broader and more sweeping burst from the north of Germany. It poured direct upon Rome. Rhadagast the German, at the head of the chosen troops of the Vandals, Suevi, Burgundians and Goths, an army of two hundred thousand savages, crossed the upper Danube, mastered the successsive barriers of Italy, the Alps, the Po, the Apennines, and spread fire and blood through the land.

In the first pause of the invasion, an army of a hundred thousand men was detached to the conquest of Gaul, where they laid waste the seventeen Roman provinces. Thus was completed the overthrow of the Roman Empire beyond the Alps. Those invaders were never expelled.

There seems to be a distinct line drawn between the action of man and Providence. We may have the petty affairs of the world for the exercise, or perhaps for the triumph of our powers. But there are times when the GREAT KING vindicates his sovereignty. The mightier changes of nations, those breakings up of the great deep that leave the earth no more the thing it was, are

none of ours. There is probably not one of those grander Revolutions, in which, to the man who will lift his eye above the shifting and turbulent atmosphere of human passions, the hand of God is not visible. Human action stops as if in exhaustion or expectancy; a new and more resistless presence is felt, with which our weakness must not partake; it goes forth alone, and triumphs alone.

The fall of the Western Empire was wrought by an agency whose existence no European mind could have conceived, which was altogether unexcited by Europe, and which continued to act steadily and resistlessly until its whole tremendous work was done. A fugitive slave at the eastern extremity of Asia had collected a band of robbers; from a band they swelled into a tribe; the tribe became rapidly the head of tribes. At length the final impulse was given. As by the sound of a trumpet, the whole Northern world, from the wall of China was in motion towards the west; nation rolled on nation, each as it reached Europe, filling up the intrenchments of the Roman Empire, each bringing with it a new power of desolation, and all rushing down on one devoted centre, Rome [26].

[26] Gibbon, c. xxx.

A.D. 408. The German armies had scarcely satiated themselves with conquest; when Italy was startled by a new invasion. Alaric had again advanced, trampled down all opposition, and pushed his cavalry to the gates of the capital. The city was helpless; and the conqueror condescended to be bought off with the gold of the nobles. For the first time since Hannibal, a period of six hundred and nineteen years, the imperial city had now felt the insult of an enemy's presence. But a deeper disgrace was still to be borne; within two years the Gothic army again advanced to the walls, and while the senate was feebly labouring to deprecate the wrath of Alaric, the gates were thrown open. The shouts of the Barbarians at midnight roused the city from its sleep. The whole furious multitude poured in; and the indescribable excesses of savage cruelty, avarice, and licentiousness, raged through Rome.

But no nation suffers without a crime. The old rough virtues of Italy had long perished, and Rome was not more prominent in rank than in corruption. Enormous wealth applied to the most worthless purposes; the morals of Paganism under the abused name of Christianity; prodigal self-indulgence even when every hour might be their last; and the loss of all public spirit,

when nothing but the boldest patriotism could have saved them; made the portraiture of the Roman nobles[27]. The populace, to the love of indolence inherent in the climate of the south, added the grossest personal licence. Industry had perished amongst them, they lived upon the alms of the state; and their lazy and pestilent condition seemed to be conscious of life, only in the public shows; in the desperate tumults common to the last feverish ages of Rome; or in the alternate pursuit of low enjoyment, and merciless revenge. With a nobility of tyrants and profligates, a people of paupers, a constitution merged in the will of dissolute boys and women, a religion rapidly sinking into the pollutions of Paganism, and a diadem shifted from head to head, at the bloody caprice of a soldier, a courtezan, or a slave; Rome presented the last spectacle of a nation self-doomed. Its fall belonged to the course of nature. There stood the great crowned criminal, ripe for the first thunder-cloud.

A.D. 409. But before the final ruin of Italy, every realm of her empire was to be shaken. Spain was invaded. The Vandals and Suevi

[27] The description by Ammianus of the general dissoluteness of Rome is highly curious and instructive, even to later times. See Gibbon, c. xxxi.

stormed the Pyrenees. The troops, posted to defend their passes, revolted and swelled the invasion. Roman and Spaniard fell before them; and the land was ravaged by the sword, pestilence, and famine.

A.D. 409. In this general and tumultuous overthrow of Roman power, there was one striking exception, the bloodless recovery of our own independence. Britain was neither insulted by the supremacy of the Barbarians, nor stained with the guilt of rebellion. The war in Italy had compelled the return of the Roman garrisons. Britain, thus left to her own strength, took up arms, fought her battles boldly against Pict and Saxon, and exhibited even in that unhonoured warfare the manly courage and vigorous perseverance, which seem the gifts of nature to the soil of freedom.

A.D. 430. There was now but one untouched fragment of the dominion of the Cæsars; the vast tract of Africa that borders the Mediterranean, a land in whose proverbial solitude we can retrace no image of the granary of Italy, covered with superb architecture, fertile fields, and an opulent and civilized population. Genseric crossed the sea at the head of the Vandal army. The seven provinces, from Tangier to Tripoli, were instantly in flames. The mountain

tribes joined the invaders. The Roman settlers found themselves surrounded at once by native and foreign hostility. During nine years the war raged with unutterable desolation; until Carthage was taken; five hundred and eighty-five years after its siege by the younger Scipio; and Genseric was monarch of northern Africa.

The war in Europe had gradually subsided. If that can be called intermission; which was filled up with the desperate feuds of rival tribes, and the rash struggles of the ruined inhabitants against their lords. But the time of ten-fold tempest was come. The northern invaders had themselves been fugitives, chafed and kindled into conquerors, only by the collision with Rome. But the conqueror of the conquerors was now on his way,—Attila, the Calmuck. Others had been the kings of Barbarians, Attila was the king of Barbarism. "He alone among the conquerors of ancient and modern times, united the two mighty kingdoms of Germany and Scythia[28]." His actual dominion touched at once the Rhine, the Baltic and the Volga. The boundless regions of the north of Asia were filled with his tributaries. Nations with their hereditary sovereigns at their head fought under his banners. A crowd

[28] Gibbon, c. xxxiv.

of monarchs and leaders of famous tribes served round his person as guards and attendants; and when he moved to battle, his army, which might be more justly called a column of that countless army which was waiting his command in the desert, the advanced guard of the northern world, amounted to half a million of men.

A.D. 441. The Tartar multitude had long unconsciously been drawn within that influence which urged all nations, the near and the remote alike, on the Roman Empire. Its first movements had been dubious and desultory. It had bent to the south, and spread over a part of Persia. But the flow of the great living morass, once loosened from its bed, soon followed a broader and more fatal road. The whole line of Europe, from the Black Sea to the Gulph of Venice, was assaulted; a frontier of five hundred miles was covered with fire and slaughter. The old arts and defences of war were idle before the inexhaustible numbers, and wild fury of the Huns. The fortified cities were instantly reduced to ashes; the troops of Constantinople were trodden down without stopping the march; two battles hunted them into the Thracian Chersonesus, and a third left the emperor without a soldier in the field. The cavalry of the Huns now swept the whole splendid

territory from the Propontis to Thermopylæ; seventy cities of the Eastern Empire were sacked; and Rome awaited, in terror and weakness, the summons of a conqueror who seemed armed with powers more than of man.

A.D. 452. The Eastern Empire had been terrified into peace, tribute, and the cession of a large territory on the Danube. Attila fixed his camp in Hungary, a camp that contained more of the elements of sovereignty than the world besides; and from his saddle dictated the law at once to Constantinople and Rome. His language to both has the uncouth grandeur of uncontroulable barbarian power. His envoys entered the presence of the Eastern and Western emperors, with the words "Attila, my lord, and thy lord, commands thee to provide a palace for his immediate reception." But the wealth of the west dangerously tempted him. He made a march of seven hundred miles with Scythian speed, crossed the Rhine, and less forced than tore his way through all resistance to the heart of Gaul. But he there found troops like his own, no degenerate Italians, but the sons of the north, the Visigoths, in order of battle under their king Theodoric. In the battle of Chalons, Theodoric fell; but Attila was repulsed, he retreated, and at length resolved on the easier triumph over

Italy. The ensuing spring (A.D. 452.) saw him moving down from the Alps, on the shore of the Adriatic. The cities along its border were laid in dust. It was the proverbial saying of the Tartars, that "where they ruined a city a horse might gallop without stumbling." The proverb was fearfully made true. Attila reached Milan, leaving the country behind him a conflagration and a grave; but he was not to atchieve the crowning triumph of all invaders,—the mastery of Rome. A mightier conqueror, that takes delight in baffling the vanity of man, stood between him and the capitol. Excess, accident, or the dagger, suddenly and obscurely closed the march and life of the great king of the Huns.

Rome was saved. But ruin was inevitable; and her exultation over the death of Attila had scarcely subsided, when she received the mortal blow.

From the shores of Africa, Genseric the Vandal saw the spoil about to fall into the hands of all nations; and he determined to have the lion's share. He secretly equipped a fleet, embarked an army, eluded or despised the feeble opposition of the imperial officers, and, before Rome dreamed of his approach, was master of the Tyber. The intelligence roused the city into universal uproar. All was confusion and helpless rage among the

people. In the palace all was terror. Without troops on which he could depend; and in the midst of impotent or traitorous counsellors, the Emperor Maximus had no resource but in flight. Even that base refuge was denied to him; he was met by the populace, dragged from his horse, and stoned to death. Genseric moved slowly on, leaving anarchy to do its work. But, on the 15th of June, as the day dawned, Rome saw, with the horrors of instant assault, all her avenues thronged with the dusky visages and strange banners of Numidia. The Roman eagle had long been despoiled of the thunderbolt, but it was now stripped of every plume.

In even the most rapid glance at the history of this pre-eminent seat of human power, it is difficult to avoid the contrast of its early manliness with its deep and effeminate decay. Nor is it without advantage to reflect upon the feebleness of individual opulence and national supremacy, divested of public morals, and the noble love of country. Hannibal, six hundred years before, when the dominion of the senate was confined within the walls, was frowned away by the armed majesty of Rome. In the glow of his triumph at Cannæ, he dared not venture on the attack of a city where he found three armies drawn up, ready to die to the last man, be-

fore a Carthaginian foot should defile the steps of the capitol. In the invasion of Genseric, Rome, still the head of a great, though distracted empire, containing incalculable wealth, and with a population of millions, could not command the services of a single soldier. The multitudes, who might have crushed the invaders by their mere weight, could find neither leaders, nor spirit to follow, if they had found them. For that torrent of more than fire, that stream of heroic steel, and indignant, patriot courage, which would have burst from the gates of ancient Rome, the city of cities could send but a procession of aged ecclesiastics to deprecate the wrath of the conqueror.

This last resource partially succeeded. The purpose of the Vandal was plunder, not massacre; and Genseric stooped to make a treaty with the Bishop of Rome. The customary horrors of Italian invasion may be best known from the terms of the treaty, which would now be barbarous to a garrison at the point of the sword. "The unresisting population were not to be *slaughtered;* the city was not to be given to the *flames;* the captives were not to be put to the *torture.*" But how much of even this merciless stipulation must have been forgotten in the scene that followed! The African army, already fu-

rious at the temporary restraint, like a wild beast roaring for its prey, at length broke through the gates; the Vandal, the Moor, the Negro, the savage of the Atlas, were all let loose together; and from the palace to the hut, Rome was filled with rapine, violation, and carnage.

Genseric sailed for Carthage, with fruits of triumph unrivalled, an Empress and her daughters, the last survivors of the line of the great Theodosius; thousands of the noblest youths and maidens captives; and a spoil of all that was venerable, lovely, or magnificent, in the imperial opulence of Rome. Among those were the ornaments of the capitol, the sacred vessels of the churches, and, more precious still, from their splendour and their history, the plunder of the temple of Jerusalem; the cups of gold, the golden table, and the seven-branched golden candlestick, the mysterious emblem of the holiest of all things. Four hundred years after Titus, those matchless reliques of the most singular, and most unfortunate people of the earth, were carried from the Roman Temple of Peace to be the sport of savages in the sands of Africa [29].

This was the death blow. The rest was the

[29] They were recovered, on the conquest of the Vandals, by Justinian.

quarrel of vulgar faction, in which the alternate victors fell without use and without honour. At length, for the final degradation, a boy, the son of Orestes, a Pannonian, and subject of Attila, was placed on the throne. By a striking coincidence, his name was Romulus Augustus, as if the national ruin was to be made more bitter by the memory of the first founder and the first Emperor of Rome. But popular usage, perhaps popular contempt, soon degraded those lofty appellations into Momyllus Augustulus.

A.D. 476. Odoacer, a bold barbarian, at the head of an army, commanded him to retire from the insulted throne. Augustulus submissively resigned. The Senate formally declared the seat of sovereignty to be removed to Constantinople; and the EMPIRE OF THE WEST was no more.

THE PAPACY.

"And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

"And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see that thou hurt not the oil and the wine[30]."

[30] Apoc. vi. 5, 6.

A.D. 451. A great prophetic change was at hand. A new Power was to rise out of the ruins of the Western Empire, and to exercise an influence which threw all earthly sovereignty into the shade.

The transfer of the sceptre to the East had largely increased the influence of the Roman See. Veneration for his spiritual office pointed out the Bishop of Rome as the natural mediator with the barbarians, the protector of the city, and the representative of its distant monarch. But a darker temptation than this honourable suffrage of the people soon arose. Rome and Constantinople, the one, proud of the imperial residence, the other of its ancient sovereignty, disputed the primacy of Christendom. The spirit of ambition spread; and, after long and factious struggles, the council of Chalcedon recognized the five patriarchates of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Palestine. Leo, the Roman Bishop, protested in vain against the equality of the Bishop of Constantinople; the Emperor sided with the council. But the Papal power was already fixed on a foundation not to be shaken by councils or Emperors. The fifth century had been from the beginning one fierce convulsion. The Northern Invasions had often clouded Rome altogether from the sight of the Sovereigns of Constantinople.

When peace came, less a remission of war, than a pause for whetting the blunted sword, and renerving the barbarian arm; the allegiance of the man who held the keys of Rome was not to be lost for points of ceremony. An additional source of power was found in the quarrels of the Eastern Sees, of which the rank and remoteness of the Pope made him the frequent arbiter. He thus rose, until the edict of Justinian at length solemnly conferred the fatal and guilty title, which first fixed him within sight of empire.

A.D. 533. Fortune had made Justinian an Emperor, necessity had made him a warrior and legislator, but nature had made him a monk. He brought to the throne the prejudices of the cloister; and at the head of a dominion, still the stateliest and most powerful of the earth, gave himself up to the hopeless perplexities and bitter personal vindictiveness of monkish controversy. "The Emperor," is the exclamation of his indignant contemporary, "sits like a private man, closeted whole nights with old priests, doing nothing but turning over Church writings[31]." The perpetual feuds of Constantinople gave ample employment to this midnight diligence. But they were all suddenly eclipsed by the bolder novelty

[31] Procop. de Bello Goth. Gibbon, c. xlvii.

of Nestorianism. A peculiar homage to the Virgin Mary had been for some time growing up in the East; it had at length approached to divine worship, and the Virgin was named "*The Mother of God!*" Nestorius, a Syrian bishop, distinguished for learning and eloquence, fearlessly pronounced the doctrine impious; and, even in the hearing of the palace, declared that the Virgin Mary was but the mother of Christ in the human nature; and that the divine nature, however mysteriously joined to it, could, as God, neither be born nor die. Justinian plunged headlong into this sacred war; persecution soon reinforced his argument for the divine maternity, and, by an imperial decree, he laid Nestorius and his disciples under the spiritual ban[32]. Some of the anathematized, in their distress, appealed to the common arbiter, Rome. To govern by artifice was the pride of the Emperor; and this unkingly craft led him to the extraordinary concession of the Papal supremacy, a measure pregnant with eternal division to his empire, hopeless schism to his religion, and still deeper and darker consequences to the world. Ancient Rome had reigned for more than twelve hundred years. But the pen which wrote the

[32] Baronii Annales. Justinian. c. vii.

decrée of Justinian was to give birth to the dominion of another Rome of a still longer duration, armed with a sterner power, and using it with a more unchangeable and remorseless pressure on mankind.

In the beginning of the memorable year, five hundred and thirty-three, Justinian sent two of the Eastern bishops as his envoys to state his case before John, "the most holy Archbishop and Patriarch of Rome." They were furnished with an imperial rescript, detailing the controversy, expressing "the Emperor's anxiety, in all instances, to communicate matters touching the General Church to his Holiness," and declaring, "that for the purpose of preserving the unity of the Apostolic See, and the existing establishment of the holy Churches of God, he had lost no time in subjecting and uniting all the priesthood of the entire East to his Holiness." The rescript further declared the Roman Bishop "*Head of all the Churches*;" and concluded by making the "knowledge of the doctrine held by his Holiness, the standard of the faith, and source of unity to all the Christian world."

This momentous paper was not left to the dubious fate of the royal archives. The doctrine that the Pope was "the Universal Bishop" was thrown into the shape of law; the substance

was repeated in the various forms of the Justinian Code; and was thus made general and immortal. It may be hopeless now to detect the entire motives of this vast concession in the subtle, yet feeble system of the imperial policy. The chances of the Vandalic war which he was about to commence, and which must have made the extinction of the religious feuds of Constantinople more important than ever; the hope of retaining an interest in the heart of Italy, which it was the imperial purpose to reconquer; or that common frenzy, which makes the true polemic think all sacrifice cheap for the triumph of words; all might have urged Justinian to purchase the voice of Rome [33]. But, however worthless the motives, the act was done, authentic and unquestionable, sanctioned by all the forms of state, and never abrogated,—the act of the first potentate of the world. If the supremacy over the Church of God had been for man to give, it might have been given by the unrivalled sovereignty of Justinian.

From this æra the Church of Rome dates the earthly acknowledgement of her claim. Its heavenly authority is referred to the remoter source of the Apostles. But the turbulence of

[33] Baronius imputes it to the first motive. Annales. Justin. Imp. vii.

the period was adverse to all titles but those of the sword. Fifty years had scarcely passed before the Patriarch of Constantinople dared to assume the name of "Universal Bishop." He found in Gregory the Great an antagonist who fiercely resisted the usurpation; pronouncing, whether in the heedless wrath of controversy, or in the more unaccountable ignorance of his own distinctions, that to arrogate the name of "Universal Bishop" was to be Antichrist. But the oversight was soon repaired. Boniface the Third obtained from the Emperor Phocas the recognition of the original title; and the Bishop of Constantinople was consigned to the second rank until the remaining union of the Churches was at an end.

A.D. 726. Two paramount doctrines, which would have struck the Apostolic age with astonishment, have long distinguished the creed of Rome. They are the pillars of her throne. On the worship of the Virgin and the Saints was already raised the spiritual supremacy; on the worship of images was now to be raised the temporal. Idolatry had rapidly spread through Christendom, in the ignorance and superstition of a time of relaxed Church discipline and civil disorder. Its worship was expressed in the strongest language that man can use to

Deity[31]. "How shall we," is the Byzantine hymn to a supposed picture of Christ, "contemplate *this image*, whose celestial splendour the *host of Heaven presumes not to behold.* He who dwells in Heaven condescends to visit us this day by his venerable image. He who is seated on the cherubim visits us this day by a picture, which the FATHER *has delineated with his immaculate hand,* which he has formed in an ineffable manner, and which we sanctify by *adoring it with fear and love.*"

This picture, "not made with hands, αχειροποιητος," the visible creation of the Almighty, was declared to have already wrought miracles, and saved the city of Edessa from an assault by the Saracens[35].

[31] Gibbon, c. xlix.

[35] It is appalling to find even in our own day, in the midst of disavowals of idolatry, and with Protestantism before their eyes, the Romish priesthood using, almost word for word, the idolatrous language of the Byzantine hymn. In the "History of the winking of the Virgin's eyes," the famous Ancona miracle, in 1796, the Abbé Albertini thus follows his model. "The Angels, which, in the height of the Empyrean, profoundly venerate their eminent *Sovereign* (the Virgin), those Angels, to whom it is not allowed to see her face, Anconitans, almost envy your good fortune.—It was Jesus Christ who first conceived the idea of this miracle. He thus addressed his mother. Go, O Reconciler and *Mediator* between God and man, whom thou hast *vanquished. I have placed thee in the seat of my power.* It is by

In the luxury of the huge, turbulent, and dissolute capital of the East, image-worship found its natural support. It was splendid, and caught the eye; it was fitted to the sensual taste of a people, extravagantly fond of ceremonial; and it sustained a vast priesthood in pompous indolence. But, in the remoter parts of the empire were "the seven thousand that had not yet bowed the knee to Baal," Churches and nations that shrank with horror from the adoration of any emblem of the Invisible and Omnipotent God. The Emperor Leo, the Isaurian, a peasant, but endowed with that vigour and capacity which made the throne less the prize of fortune than the right of the first soldier and statesman of the empire, determined to abolish a worship which he unhesitatingly pronounced Idolatry. His first reform was its prohibition in Constantinople. His next step was a command to Gregory the IId. to remove the images and pictures

thy intervention that I bestow mercy. As thou hast given me the essence of man, so give I thee the *essence of God*, my omnipotence, by which *thou canst save* from punishment *all who recommend themselves to thee!*"

Pope Pius the VIIth authenticated this abomination by crowning the picture, May 13, 1814, annexing to it a plenary indulgence for the remission of sins, and appointing the second *Sunday* of May for its annual holiday!

from the Roman altars. The Pope answered his Sovereign with haughty defiance. His letter was a declaration of war. "You accuse the Catholics of idolatry. By the accusation, you betray your own impiety and ignorance. You assault us, tyrant, with a carnal and military hand. We can only implore Christ that he will send you a devil for the destruction of your body, and the salvation of your soul. Are you ignorant that the Popes are the bonds of union, the mediators of peace between the East and the West? The eyes of the nations are fixed on our humility, and they revere, as a GOD ON EARTH, the apostle St. Peter, whose image you threaten to destroy. The remote kingdoms of the West present their homage to *Christ* and his *Vicegerent.* The barbarians have submitted to the yoke of the Gospel, while you alone are deaf to the voice of the shepherd. Those pious barbarians are kindled into rage, they *thirst to avenge* the persecution of the East. Abandon your rash and fatal enterprize; reflect, tremble, and repent. If you persist, we are innocent of the blood that will be spilt; may it fall on your own head [36]."

The manifesto was followed by instant action.

[36] Gibbon, c. xlix.

Gregory cast his pastoral letters like firebrands through Italy, and the whole Peninsula was in a blaze. The Imperial fleets and troops were baffled in a series of conflicts by the undisciplined valour of fanaticism. A final battle was fought on the Po with such slaughter of the Greeks, that, for six years, the people refused to eat the fish of the river. Rome became once more a republic; the Imperial vassalage of seven hundred and fifty years was closed; and as the proudest symbol of victory, image-worship was established the religion of the Western world.

In the Jewish Code, idolatry was declared to be the sin of sins, the most direct offence to that God who claims the undivided homage of the heart, the most open evidence of the alienation of man, the great peculiar crime which smote beyond the criminal, and tainted the blood of posterity [37]. No evasion was suffered in either the degree of the worship, or the form of the Image. The people were forbidden to "*bow down or serve*," and they were equally forbidden to take their graven Image from any object in the worlds of matter or mind. Earth and Heaven—nature, and the imagination of those glo-

[37] "Unto the third and fourth generation of them that *hate* me." Exod. xx. 5.

rious shapes that inhabit immortality, were alike closed upon them. Neither the sacred animal of the Egyptian, the Greek demigod, the Syrian star-worship, nor the Indian emblems of the attributes, though all familiar to the knowledge of the Jew, were endured by the Divine law. The purpose of Judæism was, to preserve the knowledge of the true God among men. But the preservation of that knowledge was so incompatible with image-worship, that its slightest touch was declared to be national pollution. The ruin of the idol priests and altars constituted the merit of kings; the toleration was their downfall; the national perversion, which still dared to adopt the rites of the neighbouring states, was visited with a succession of tremendous and predicted calamities, wound up in that seventy years' captivity, which gave the Jews into the hands of a barbarian, left their Temple in dust, and broke them down from the ancient and illustrious kingdom of David and Solomon into the trembling dependency, which one consummate crime more was to extinguish by the sword of Rome.

But there is no wilfulness in the divine prohibition of idolatry. The evil grows out of no mere positive law; which yet the Lord of our being must have a right to impose at his plea-

sure; the natural effects of image-worship are impurity and impiety.

The world has been often pronounced a place of trial. Its truer title might be a place of education; life, a discipline, by which we are *exercised* into the possession of those loftier qualities, which, by exercise, become habit, by habit become nature, and without which man may, even by physical laws, be incapable of the future world. "Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord," is equivalent to the words, without holiness no man *can* see the Lord. But the chief part of human vice is evidently founded on the predominance of the sensual over the moral and intellectual nature, grasping the trivial and immediate enjoyment, in preference to the nobler, but more remote reward,—earth, to the supreme prospects of eternity.

But, to raise mankind into the habit of resisting the immediate impulse, what could be more effectual than the idea of an Omnipotent Being perpetually present, living and acting in the whole course of nature, reading their inmost thoughts, incapable of being evaded, and viewing their whole lives at once with the eye of a father, and the justice of a sovereign; yet, in all *invisible*. The contemplation of such a Being, incontestibly existing, and incontestibly superior

to all that the senses can show, must shake their supremacy. Experience gives proof of this; and perhaps no man has ever fixed his mind upon the idea of God, without finding himself for the time less shackled by the impressions of his corporeal nature. But the *habit* created by this one stupendous conception would have, like all other habits, a tendency to spread over the whole mind.

Thus too, we, perhaps, may solve the problem of the extraordinary magnificence of the Jewish ceremonial. All that the arts and opulence of earth could contribute, architectural grandeur, sculpture, the jewels and embroidery of the East, a host of minstrels, a whole tribe for the service of the altar, illustrated the Temple worship beyond the most prodigal splendours of Paganism. Its purpose was to fill the Jewish mind with the transcendant idea of HIM to whom that worship was still an unworthy homage. But the offering was to THE INVISIBLE. An image, even a true image, the most sublime attempt to visibly represent the being of God, would have overthrown the intellectual worship, and so far restored the old dominion of the sensual nature. We can conceive the astonishment of a Pagan conqueror, a Pompey or a Titus, when, after hastening through marble courts, and passing veil after

veil of gold and purple, to wonder at the overwhelming glory of the idol worthy of such a shrine, he found but the sacred loneliness of the sanctuary; yet more majestic in that loneliness, than if within it had been throned a Colossus of solid diamond.

Another unanswerable charge lies against all image-worship. It gives an untrue representation; a picture or a statue cannot realize the form of Deity. It gives a humiliating one; matter for spirit, lifelessness for essential activity; feeble, earthly locality for that Infinite Presence, which the Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens, cannot contain.

But the evil is more than negative. It is the course of human weakness to substitute the seen for the unseen. The statue rapidly supersedes the God. Yet, let the worshipper's veneration be what it will, he cannot escape the consciousness that the thing to which he kneels is a stock or a stone. If such be the Deity, what must be the religion. Deification will be as easy as the erection of a statue. The superstitious will deify their dreams, the profligate their passions, the timid and ignorant their fears and follies. Thus the ancient Roman raised altars to beings of notorious fable, and to actual impurity. The modern, often on the strength of the same legend,

offers to the same image; the African fabricates a devil, and bows down.

From this the course is precipitate to the deepest religious corruption. Multiplied statues involve multiplied shrines, ceremonies, and priests. Number produces competition; popularity is purchased by artifice; encreased pomp of ceremonial, more dextrous legend, or bolder miracle. There is at this hour scarcely a Church in Italy that has not its favourite saint, its wonder-working relic, and its chronicle crowded with the achievements of both. The rivalry is urged on, until the land is covered with idols, or partitioned into sacred principalities, within whose bounds the reigning saint admits of no division of power. What is the God of heaven and earth at Naples in the presence of St. Januarius, at Palermo in the presence of St. Rosolia, at Loretto in the presence of the Virgin, at Rome in the presence of St. Peter!

In this struggle of hypocrisy and ambition, the Scriptures are, of necessity, forgotten, or suppressed as a dangerous testimony; the simple fervour and unworldly wisdom of religion are trampled down in the general bustle of the passions; and the system issues forth armed and accomplished, in the perfect evil of idolatry; tradition for Scripture; ritual for virtue; Atheism

for Christianity; for the authentic and necessary ministers of the faith, a boundless priesthood, nurtured in fatal ignorance, or indolent and luxurious corruption, soliciting the favour of the populace by relaxing the obligations of the divine law; the ready tools of zealotry and persecution, having an original and vital interest in suppressing the progress of truth; preachers of blind submission, and artificers of productive imposture.

The representative adoration of Popery was the express worship of the Pagans. "Statues are worshipped," says Arnobius, "not that the gold or silver, or similar material of the images are gods, but because through them, the invisible gods are honoured and worshipped." And this was unquestionably the impression of the higher and thinking classes of Paganism. Yet against the whole image-worship the Apostles contended, not less vehemently than the Jewish Lawgiver, declaring it in all its shapes an abomination, a demon-worship, and infecting even those who merely ate of the sacrifice with the guilt of rebellion against Heaven.

A.D. 754. To the abolition of image-worship, the Eastern Church at length gave its most complete adherence. The Emperor Leo had proceeded demolishing the symbols of idolatry till his death.

His son and successor, Constantine, summoned the Byzantine, or seventh general council, consisting of three hundred and thirty-eight bishops of Europe and Anatolia. The western Churches had been already withdrawn by the Pope. A deliberation of six months produced an unanimous decree, "that all visible symbols of Christ, except in the Eucharist, were blasphemous and heretical;—that image-worship was a corruption of Christianity, and a *renewal of Paganism!*—that all such monuments of idolatry should be broken or erased; and that those who should refuse to deliver up the objects of their private superstition, were guilty of disobedience to the Church and the Emperor[38]."

A.D. 787. In scarcely more than thirty years after, this wise and scriptural decision was subverted by a corrupt council, the second of Nice, hastily convened, and influenced by the Empress Irene, an usurper, and a persecutor.

The connexion of the Popes with the dynasty of Charlemagne is the true commencement of the modern history of Europe. The mind turns with equal weariness and disdain from the useless slaughters and nameless rivalries of that barbarism, which had continued to cover the fallen

[38] Gibbon, c. xlix.

Empire with disorder, till, in the just emblem of prophecy, it was a "raging sea." The uproar at length subsided; and ten separate and independent sovereignties, like mountain-tops from the flood, the promise of better times, were seen slowly to emerge. But the controversy of image-worship had inflamed anew the minds of the northern warriors; the summons of the Pope to resist the Emperor had awakened the old love of battle; and the Greeks were scarcely repelled, when Rome, in surprise and terror, saw the Lombard banners advancing to her walls. Gregory implored the aid of France, then governed by Charles Martel in the name of its imbecile monarch. Fear of the first soldier of Europe, immortalized by the overthrow of the Saracens; and the dexterity of papal negociation, induced the Lombards to retire. A new king of this turbulent tribe more resolutely repeated the invasion. But the Popes had in the interval secured an irresistible ally. Pepin, the son of Martel, weary of the second rank, had dethroned his sovereign, Childeric, the last of the line of Clovis. In superstition, or in fear of the popular memory of the famous founder of the throne, he solicited the papal sanction. It was freely given; Pope Zachary pronounced that the king should be deposed, shaven, and imprisoned in a

monastery for life. The usurper was crowned by the papal delegation to Boniface, the Apostle of Germany. This important service was not forgotten. In the new peril of the city, Stephen, the successor of Zachary, fled across the Alps, to lay his grievances before the usurper. Pepin, to give a still firmer title to his diadem, was re-crowned by the Pope; and at the head of an army escorted him to Italy, attacked the Lombards, and compelled them to a peace. A second invasion was met by a second and heavier repulse, and the Exarchate of Ravenna was torn from Astulphus, the Lombard king, and given in full dominion to the Pope, who was invested with the choice of magistrates, the exercise of justice, the imposition of taxes, the whole sovereignty of a government comprehending the territories of Ravenna, Bologna, and Ferrara, with the Pentapolis, stretching along the Adriatic, from Rimini to Ancona, and advancing into the country, to the foot of the Apennine. The Lombards shrank under the blow; but a new monarch in France, a new Pope, and the recovery of their strength in twenty years of indignant submission, roused them to a last desperate hazard. Pope Adrian again summoned his ally. Charlemagne, at the head of the chivalry of the west, came thundering into the field. The Lombards were crushed

by the discipline and multitude of Gaul and Germany. After a succession of ruinous encounters and a blockade of two years, Desiderius, their king, was taken prisoner in Pavia, and (A.D. 774.) the sovereignty was at an end.

The conqueror marched to Rome, and was received with the honours of an ancient triumph. Of all pomps, the pomps of war are the stateliest, yet perhaps, neither old Rome could have seen, nor can modern armies furnish a show of such picturesque and impressive magnificence, as the march of a conqueror of the middle ages.

In the triumph of Charlemagne, superstition heightened the pomp. He had fought the battle of the Popedom. The Holy Banner met him at the distance of a day's journey. As he advanced, the emblems of the saints and martyrs, the cross and the relic, were mingled with the lances and standards. Moving through the ranks of the Roman soldiery, and saluted by the hymns of palm-bearing youths and maidens, as he reached the gates of the holy city, he dismounted, and at the head of his nobles, putting off the conqueror, and assuming the pilgrim, he kissed each step of the ascent to the Vatican. On the threshold, presumed to have been trodden by the Apostles, he was received by the Pope surrounded by his chief clergy, and, amid the ap-

plause and almost the adoration of Rome, the eldest son and champion of the Church, was conducted by its spiritual king to worship at the feet of St. Peter!

From this crisis sprang up consequences the most momentous. Charlemagne, in the exultation of his triumph, made over to the Popes the whole of the cities and islands belonging, in the widest sense, to the Exarchate. Ambition was inflamed. A forged decree of the first Constantine, the guilty "donation," was then produced by Adrian, declaring the original resignation of the sovereignty of Rome, Italy, and the west, to the Popes for ever. Thus the revolt of Gregory was justified; the gift of Pepin and Charlemagne declared to be only a restitution; and the right established, by which the Romish see was to arrogate the temporal and spiritual supremacy of the world.

The assumption of temporal sovereignty by a Christian Ecclesiastic was a crime against the whole tenor of Scripture. The strongest declarations that could be made by language or emblem, had been made by our Lord, against any claim of temporal authority for himself or the Apostles. The precept lived through the whole teaching of our Lord, was acted upon in the whole Apostolic history, and was transmitted to the

last ages of the Church as its irreversible law. In the subordination necessary for the service of the primitive Church, there was the most anxious avoidance of all that partakes of temporal power. St. Paul, in the full exercise of his gifts and labours, and with an unhesitating assertion of his rights, throws aside all personal claim. St. Peter dies with the words on his tongue, "Be not lords over God's heritage." As they lived, so they died; whether slain among the promiscuous executions of the Roman sword, or in a laborious and humble old age, laying their bones in a barbarian grave.

Yet the ground of the prohibition is perhaps not equally obvious. That our Lord, who came for the express purpose of laying down his life, should have refused earthly power; or that he, who was the King of kings, should have turned away from a kingdom of this world, is conceivable. But the primary purpose of the Apostolic mission was not to die. The purest shape of virtue might sit unstained upon a throne, or be even more resplendent from the greater difficulty and temptation of the high place of power. Providence wills the happiness of man; and among the most beneficent gifts of Providence to a nation is a good king. What a fortunate and glorious change might not have been wrought

in the fates of the Roman Empire, if the throne of Nero had been filled by one of the early followers of our Lord. They had among them the native qualities for a throne. Christianity supersedes none of the talents or virtues of our nature. The mere human courage, promptitude, and sincerity of Peter, would have made him a noble depositary of power. If manliness and decision, vigour of mind and generosity of heart, become a sovereign; glory and happiness would have overshadowed the people among whom Paul bore the sceptre. And the acquisition might have been easy. The pursuit of sovereignty could have offered to such men but few of the obstacles that beset ordinary ambition. With the power of miracle, they possessed all power. What could finally resist the popular strength of those who came armed with supernatural might, before whom disease vanished, who bade the dumb speak, and the blind see, and the lame take up his bed and walk? What grateful and irresistible millions would not have cleared the way to supremacy, before beings of whom they already cried "The gods have come down among men?"

Nor was the combination of divine office with human power prohibited by the original law. The Jewish Judge, under the theocracy, exercised the functions of king and priest. He made

war, and he consecrated peace, he led the armies to the field, and he sacrificed in the temple; and this union of powers, established by the express ordinance of the Deity, and emblematic of his own concentration of all power, continued through the golden age of Israel, from Joshua to Samuel, a period of more than three hundred years.

The source of the distinction is, that the Christian ecclesiastic, from the highest rank to the lowest, is appointed for a teacher. The chief purpose of the Jewish priesthood was the performance of the temple worship, teaching was the inferior duty. But, "Go ye, and teach all nations," is the one comprehensive commission given to the Apostles and their successors through every age of Christianity.

A duty of this nature excluded temporal sovereignty. What reception could the Gospel expect from men to whom it was delivered by a missionary bearing the Bible in the same stern hand that ruled the labours of the throne and field? With what conviction could they listen to the preaching of the gentle virtues, from lips that had but the moment before been proclaiming even justifiable wrath against a rebel or an enemy? How were converts to be won to the meekness and unworldly humility of the gospel, by a teacher, however pious, clothed in the habitual pomp of royalty,

or wielding the sword that is to be a terror to evil-doers.

But a still more sufficient reason may have originated in the divine foreknowledge. He who knew what was in man, must have contemplated the peril of Christian truth in the caprice of a teacher armed with royal authority. Religion allows of no appeal but to the understanding; for no righteous conviction can be produced by force. But with what fearful facility might not the monarch-priest confound the limits of reason and power; how insensibly might not resistance to the doctrine be construed into resistance to the sovereignty; how rapidly might not the ignorance, the passions and the corruptions of the sceptered controversialist gather in ruin over the head of his rash antagonist, the doubter and the rebel be declared one, and the truth be borne down by the argument of fire and sword! The full illustration is to be found in the History of the Popedom.

The temporal dominion of the Pontiffs had now been established by the gift of the Exarchate, yet they were still at a distance of four hundred years from complete supremacy. Charlemagne in right of his father and grandfather was *Patrician* of Rome, a rank conferring the honours and authority of the ancient representative of the

eastern Emperors. Under this popular title he was virtually monarch; allegiance was sworn to him and his family by the Romans, money was coined, and justice administered in his name, even the election of the Popes required his confirmation; and to the end of his life Rome and Ravenna were included in the list of cities belonging to the resistless sovereign of the Franks and Lombards [39].

Italian intrigue, or the natural ambition of the first king and soldier of Europe, at length gave him his true title, and Rome, after a lapse of three centuries, was again to see an Emperor.

A.D. 800. On the death of Adrian the first, his nephew had been set aside for Leo, a priest of the Lateran. The partizans of the disappointed candidate waited but the moment of revenge. In a public ceremony they rushed on Leo, scattered his attendants, and left him for dead. He recovered, made his complaint to the Patrician, and finally appeared before Charlemagne at his camp in Westphalia. His quarrel was espoused, an army marched to the capital, the Pontiff purified by oath of all charges, and the defeated faction sent into banishment. On Christmas day mass was celebrated in St. Peter's, at which Char-

[39] Gibbon, c. xlix.

lemagne attended in the ancient dress of a Roman Patrician. At a pause in the service, Leo advanced, bearing a diadem, which he placed on the unconscious head of Charlemagne, who long after persisted in denying all expectation of this act of "irresistible gratitude." He was instantly hailed with the universal acclamation, "Long life and victory to Charles, the most pious Augustus, crowned by God, the great and pacific Emperor of the Romans."

This event cemented that connexion with the German empire, one of the most singular in history, by which the Pope was at once a subject and a king, and the Popedom at once in a state of independence and vassalage. Charlemagne was now the unquestioned Prince of Rome. Yet the rights of personal and public sovereignty granted by his father and himself had never been annulled. Even the sweeping "donation" of Constantine, by which the sovereignty of the west had been claimed, was not disturbed. That claim never slumbered, and it was at length put into tremendous action. But, until the hour, seen through a vista of four hundred years of dissimulation and blood, when it was realized, and the Pope wielded from the Vatican all the monarchies of Europe; he was the nominal vassal of the successors of Charlemagne.

Yet, in Rome, the Pope already possessed the power of a monarch. The life of the Emperor was all a battle, or the march that led to battle; the furious overthrow of Barbarian altars, or the hazardous struggle with the native bravery and rugged resources of the Baltic tribes. The eye and the arm of this indefatigable man were in constant activity; and his reliques still give evidence of the extraordinary effects that may be wrought by the energy of an individual mind. Charlemagne either conquered or kept in obedience by his single vigour an empire embracing nearly the whole of France, Italy, Germany, Hungary, and Spain! He was besides a legislator, and a theologian, such as the age could make; the convener, and leader of the celebrated council of Frankfort, in 794, in their condemnation of the worship of images. But his more unshared praise is that, he had the intelligence to conceive, and the manliness to adopt systems of national improvement, to which his personal habits could have offered but slight temptation. A soldier, he yet encouraged commerce and the arts; a despot, he drew round him able men of all opinions; little acquainted with literature, and not even having learned to write until mature age, he founded schools and colleges; and those honourable labours were the fruit of such leisure as

could be snatched from thirty-three campaigns of constant and sometimes doubtful battle.

A.D. 888. In the division of the empire by his degenerate descendants, in the decay of his line, and in the long interregnum of seventy-four years that followed the deposition of the last remnant of his blood, the Popes consolidated their influence, without yet asserting their freedom.

A.D. 962. The restoration of the Western empire by Otho, the Saxon, produced only a repetition of the march of Charlemagne. He poured his troops into Italy, overwhelmed its innumerable and corrupt factions, fixed the Pope in unmolested power, and claimed the Imperial crown as the inalienable right of the Sovereign of Germany. This established the two memorable maxims with the force of law. 1. That the Prince elected in the German diet acquired from that instant the subject kingdoms of Italy and Rome. 2. That he might not legally assume the titles of Emperor and Augustus, until he had received the crown from the hands of the Pope[40].

A.D. 1073. But this connection had now done its work, and was to be dissolved. Gregory the

[40] Gibbon, c. xlix.

VIIth, a man of ability and ambition, openly laid the foundation of independence, by determining to fix the election of the Popes in the College of Cardinals [41], and to abolish the right of interference alike of the German Emperors, and of the people of Rome. Another still bolder project inflamed the spirit of this celebrated monk; the privilege of bestowing the Western empire as a fief of the Church, and the extension of the temporal dominion of the Popes over Christendom.

A.D. 1198. The man at length appeared who was to consummate the ambition of the Popedom. The Pontiffs had hitherto been chiefly of obscure birth, and of advanced age [42], taken from the cloister, and withered by the cloister. Lotharius, Cardinal Deacon, was elected to the Papal chair, by the name of Innocent the IIId., in his thirty-seventh year. By descent a man of rank, Count of Segni; celebrated for his knowledge of the canon law, the chief learning of the age; and in the vigour of life, of talent, and the bolder passions, he possessed all the qualities essential to the triumph of kingly ambition. The time was favourable. From the Vatican he

[41] This was done by the decree of the Lateran Council, A.D. 1179, under Alexander the IIId. (Mosheim, Cen. xii.)

[42] The average reign of the Popes has been about nine years.

saw Europe a dungeon or a desert; Germany convulsed with political faction; France perplexed with religious dispute; Spain sustaining a ruinous and protracted war with the Moor. England wasted by ancient feuds, and about to plunge her remaining vigour into civil and ecclesiastical struggle, that bitter travail from which, in a remoter age, her faith and freedom were to be born. In the whole circle of Europe neither sagacity nor strength were visible to resist the young and daring monarch who domineered over it from its sacred central throne. The Roman polity already spoke the haughtiest language of power. "The Pope is the Lord of the world; neither Prince nor Bishop, neither civil nor ecclesiastical ruler, can have any lawful authority in Church or State underived from him [43]." The successful activity with which this more than conqueror pursued his career may be seen from a slight detail of his principal transactions in nearly the order in which they occurred [44].

His first act was the total subjection of the city of Rome to the Papal See. The prefect and magistrates had hitherto taken an oath of alle-

[43] Mosheim. Cen. xii.

[44] Muratori. Gesta Innoc. Script. R. Ital.

giance to the Emperor of Germany. This he instantly abolished, and transferred their allegiance to himself.

He recovered the March of Ancona and other districts usurped from the See.

He now commenced the exercise of his power over sovereigns. He excommunicated Alphonsus King of Gallicia and Leon for marrying within the prohibited degrees.

He compelled, by the threat of excommunication, Sanctius King of Portugal to renew his tribute to Rome.

He laid the foundations of the Inquisition, by sending commissioners to France, superseding the authority of the Bishops in matters of heresy.

He invested Constantia, the widow of the Emperor of Germany, and her son, with the kingdom of Sicily.

He declared and supported a new candidate for the empire, thus giving rise to a furious war which lasted till 1207.

He laid France under an interdict for its Monarch's rejection of his Queen. By this most formidable infliction to a superstitious age, the King was compelled to submission.

He reunited Bulgaria and Wallachia to his See. He threatened the King of Hungary with

excommunication, and reduced him to obedience.

He crowned Peter King of Arragon, demanding of him an oath to be "faithful and obedient to his Lord, Pope Innocent the IIId," and obtaining a yearly tribute.

He received the submission of the Patriarch of Constantinople; subsequently declared his election null; and finally confirmed it, consecrating him.

He excommunicated the Venetians.

He confirmed the German imperial crown to Philip, whom he had before excommunicated. The excommunication was taken off only at the entreaty of a deputation from the Bishops of Germany.

In 1203, Innocent raised the war of persecution against the Albigenses in the south of France, absolving the subjects of the Count of Thoulouse from their oath of allegiance.

In 1208 the celebrated transaction occurred, which showed England that she was neither too remote nor too powerful to be safe from the Roman sceptre. King John's refusal to receive Langton as Archbishop of Canterbury on the Pope's nomination, had roused the wrath of the Vatican. England was laid under an Interdict. By this act, which may well excite our astonishment at the

temper of the times in which it could have been inflicted, or been borne, the whole kingdom was instantly put out of the pale of Christianity. The churches were closed, the dead were buried in the highways, and without any funeral solemnity; the sacrament was prohibited; of all the rites, baptism alone remained. A more personal blow was then levelled at the King, in his excommunication, and the nullity of the oath of allegiance. A third, and, if possible, still more extraordinary assumption of power, was the declaration that the English throne was vacant, and that it was given to the French King. The result is too familiar to be repeated. The haughtiness of the Papal Legate, the guilty pusillanimity of John, and the bitter and contemptuous wrath of the nation at seeing the crown profaned by the foot of an Italian priest, have been engraved in records more imperishable than brass or marble, have been burnt in on the memory of England by the indignant and immortal fires of poetry.

His daring and turbulent life had now approached its end. His last act was worthy to crown his successes. In 1215, he convened the fourth Lateran Council; the most pompous assemblage ever gathered under the auspices of Rome, a convocation of the Ecclesiastical world. At it were present the two Patriarchs of Constanti-

nople and Jerusalem; the deputies of the Patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch; four hundred and twelve Bishops; and Ambassadors from all the Christian Kings. It was the declared submission of Christendom, East and West; the civilized earth at the footstool of the Popedom. At this council, the tenets of Popery, hitherto growing up in silence or shapelessness, were collected, formed, and promulgated, as the eternal law of Rome. Innocent had the ominous distinction of setting the seal to transubstantiation—auricular confession—the right of deposing kings—the subjection of all ecclesiastical powers—and the Papal supremacy, spiritual and temporal, over all Christians, all ranks of authority, and all mankind.

His dying hours were characteristic of the superstition which held even his bold and sagacious spirit in chains. Feeling his decay, he carried in public procession the Veronica, a pretended picture of our Lord on a napkin, from the Church of the Holy Ghost to St. Peter's, and back again; composed a prayer in honour of the picture; and granted a ten day's indulgence to those who should visit the idol. He died in 1216.

"And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

"And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed[45]."

The spiritual supremacy of Rome had, almost in the moment of its birth, been disowned, even in Italy. The Arch-diocese of Milan, consisting of the seven provinces, Liguria, Œmilia, Flaminia, Venetia, the Cottian and Greek Alps, and Rhetia or the Grisons, the ancient government of the Lieutenant of the western Prætorian Præfect, had long pursued their own ritual, and established the Ambrosian Liturgy.

But their first open separation from Rome was in the year 553. It became still more distinct in 590, when nine of the bishops rejected the communion of the Pope as a heretic, and refused obedience to the command of the Emperor Mauritius, to be present at a council at Rome, denying that they could communicate with Gregory the 1st[46].

[45] Apoc. xiii. 11, 12.

[46] Allix. Churches of Piemont, p. 35.

A.D. 817. The prelates of the Milanese had struggled, at the council of Francfort, against the general corruption of the Papacy. But an eminent man suddenly arose to embody their resistance, and to take the lead equally in enlightening the Church, and breaking down the Romish supremacy. Claudius, a Spaniard, had been one of the chaplains of Lewis the Pious; who, on his accession to the German Empire, had appointed this able and learned man to the bishopric of Turin. The rank was high, for Turin was a metropolitan see; though the title of archbishop was not yet introduced. The Romish idolatry had made rapid advances in the north of Italy; and the appointment of Claudius was the honourable testimony to talents and virtues which made him the fittest champion of the truth. He instantly unsheathed that only legitimate and irresistible sword, which is put into human hands by the Spirit; he spread the Scriptures. He wrote for the people successive explanations of Genesis, St. Matthew, the Epistle to the Galatians, the Ephesians, Exodus and Leviticus. The chief points of his teaching were all in direct opposition to the Papal theology. He declared that—

Christ is the only head of the Church, the Apostles were all equal, and the only primacy of St. Peter consisted in his having had the

sacred honour of founding the Church among the Jews and Gentiles.

The Romish doctrine of merits is altogether unfounded in Scripture.

Tradition in religion is of no value.

Man is to be saved only by faith in the Saviour's sacrifice.

The Church among men is liable to error.

Prayers for the dead are useless.

Image-worship is sin.

The reputation and doctrines of this great man soon spread through Italy, and even into Spain. The Papal court, not yet daring to persecute the favoured bishop of the Emperor, turned its pen upon him; and the chief memorials of his opinions are now to be found in the writings of his adversaries. But even in those suspicious depositaries, they exhibit a manliness and vigour which realize the character of the man. He had broken the images in his diocese, and had written, in defence of this bold proceeding, a treatise against image-worship, pilgrimages, the adoration of saints and relics, &c. A fragment of this treatise is quoted by Dungalus, one of his opponents. Its force distinguishes it strikingly from the loose and heavy perplexity of the old controversial style.

"But, mark what the followers of the false re-

ligion and superstition allege; they say, it is in commemoration and honour of our Saviour, that they serve, honour, and adore the cross. They witness thereby that they perceive of him only what the wicked perceived, whether Jews or Heathens, who do not see his resurrection, nor consider him but as altogether swallowed up by death; unminding what the Apostle saith, 'we know Jesus Christ no longer, according to the flesh.'

"God commands one thing, and those people do the direct contrary. God commands us to bear our cross, and *not to worship* it. But those are all for worshipping it, whereas they do not bear it at all.

"If we ought to adore the cross because Christ was fastened to it, how many other things are there which touched Christ? Did he not remain nine months in the Virgin's womb? why not then on the same ground, worship all virgins, because a virgin brought forth Jesus Christ? why not adore mangers and old clouts, because he was laid in a manger, and wrapped in swaddling clothes? why not adore fisher-boats, because he slept in one of them, and preached to the multitude, and caused a net to be cast out, wherewith was caught a miraculous quantity of fish? why not adore asses, because he entered Jerusalem upon the foal of an ass? and lambs, because it is written

of him, Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world? yet those men would rather eat lambs than worship their images! why not worship lions, because he is called the Lion of the tribe of Judah? or rocks, because it is said, "and the Rock was Christ?" or thorns, because he was crowned with them? or lances, because one of them pierced his side?

"All those things are ridiculous; and rather to be lamented, than to be written. But we are forced to write them in opposition to fools; and to declaim against those hearts of stone which the arrows and sentences of the word of God cannot pierce. Come to yourselves again, ye miserable transgressors; why are ye gone astray from the truth, and why being become vain, are ye fallen in love with vanity, why do ye crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to open shame?

"We know well that this passage of the Gospel is very ill understood, 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven;' under the pretence of which words the stupid and ignorant people, destitute of all spiritual knowledge, betake themselves to Rome, in hopes of obtaining eternal life. For the ministry belongs to all the true superintendants

and pastors of the Church, who discharge the same, as long as they are in this world: and when they have paid the debt of death, others succeed to their places, who enjoy the same authority and power.

"Return, O ye blind, to your light; return to him who enlightens every man that cometh into the world! If we must believe God when he promiseth, how much more when he swears, and saith that, if Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it; that is, if the Saints whom you call upon were endowed with as great holiness, as great righteousness, and as much merit as those were, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter. And it is for this end that he makes this declaration, viz. that none might put their confidence in either the merits or the intercession of Saints. Ye fools, when will ye be wise; Ye who run to Rome, to seek there the intercession of an apostle?

"The fifth thing with which you reproach me is, that it displeaseth you that the Apostolic Lord, (for so you are pleased to call Pope Paschal deceased,) had honoured me with this charge. But, forasmuch as the words, 'Apostolicus dicitur quasi Apostoli custos,' may intimate as much as the Apostle's keeper; know that he only is Apostolic, who is the guardian

and keeper of the Apostle's doctrine; and not he who boasts himself to be seated in the chair of the Apostle, and in the mean time doth not acquit himself of the charge of the Apostle; for the Lord saith, 'The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' chair.'"

Those who have glanced over the dreary volumes of the Romish apologists will best feel the wonder of this noble vigour in the ninth century, the spirit of eloquence and life which is administered by the defence of the truth of God. The mind, that then could pour out this lofty and hallowed reprobation of Idolatry and Rome, was visibly touched by the coal from the altar.

But the increasing temporal power of the Papacy, and the blind submission with which the German Emperors lent themselves to the violences of Rome, gradually destroyed the independence of the Milanese Church. The Scriptures perished, or were borne away with the exiled Christians to the valleys of the Alps; and the seven provinces were added to the gigantic diocese of Rome.

The last embers of the faith in Italy had been scattered, and the Popedom had turned to its secondary work of territorial aggrandizement, when the flame was discovered to have been rekindled in the Alps. Persecution was let loose

upon the people of the valleys, and a multitude were driven to take refuge in the southern provinces of France. Under the protection of the Count of Thoulouse and the principal Lords of the south their converts multiplied, until they amounted to so large a number that the Papal order commanding their expulsion found the Count Raymond determined to support the cause of the Albigenses [47].

In the year 1160, Peter, surnamed Waldensis, (of the Vallies,) a Barbe [48], or preacher of the Vaudois, had come into France, distributing the Scriptures, and converting the people of Provence to the Faith. But the origin of the Vaudois system of doctrines was known to be even then of great antiquity. There are extant copies of their Belief, dated A.D. 1100. The Inquisitor, Reinerius Sacco, computed it to be five hundred years old. He might have justly ascended still higher, and placed it in the age of the Apostles. The first effort of the Papal Missionaries was to calumniate the doctrines; the next, to destroy

[47] The name was not general till after the council of Albi, 1254. It was given from the principal district of the Reformed, (Albi being the chief city,) which lay between the Garonne and the Rhone.

[48] Barbe is Uncle in the Vaudois dialect, a name of affection given to their preachers.

the people. The Waldenses were charged with Manichæism. But their creed is the irresistible proof of the utter futility of the charge.

The Manichees, an Asiatic sect, who had risen in the third century, totally perverted the Gospel, by mingling it with the fabulous and metaphysic corruptions of the East. They held two eternal principles, a good and an evil. They rejected the entire of the Old Testament, and nearly the entire of the new. They condemned marriage. They conceived the creation of the earth and man to have been the work of the evil principle. They denied free will. They denied the mortal existence of our Lord, his death, and his resurrection. They denied the resurrection of the body. They rejected baptism; they rejected the cup in the Communion[49].

The creed of the Waldenses must be taken not from the Romish divines, who alternately slaughtered and libelled them, but from their own public expositions at the time. From those documents it appears incontestibly, that

They received the whole Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, and those alone.

They believed in one Mediator between God and man; and denied the mediation and worship of saints.

[49] Allix.

They believed in the hope of eternal life, only through the sacrifice of the Lord Christ, and without purgatory.

They allowed of but two Sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

They denied the efficacy of the Mass; tradition, as equal to, or fit to be associated with the authority of Scripture; and the Scriptural necessity or suitableness of the fasts, feasts, and general hierarchy of the Romish Church[50].

It is evident that those are the doctrines of Scripture, and that they are equally and irreconcileably opposed to Manichæism and Romanism. But it was the Popish outcry of the day. The denial of transubstantiation was pronounced to be the denial of our Lord's real existence,—Manichæism. The refusal to worship the Virgin and the Cross was pronounced to be a denial of the actual birth of Christ and of his crucifixion,—Manichæism. But the charge was useful to involve the Reformed in the persecution of those unfortunate enthusiasts. The decrees of the Eastern and Western Monarchs had already gone forth against the Manichees; and it required only to combine the Christians in the scandal, to combine them in the execution.

[50] Ranken. Hist. France, v. iii. 202. See Perrin, &c. &c.

Yet it is unquestionable that some extraordinary sects were generated from the sudden freedom of the Scriptures. Opinions started forth, whose extravagance excited the pity and astonishment of the Christian. The first burst of light is often too strong for the eye accustomed to darkness; the first consciousness of liberty has often maddened the prisoner; and there is no instance of a revival of religion in which the truth has not been humiliated by those sectarian wanderings, which prove at once the ardour of the human heart, and the weakness of the human understanding; Beghards, Cathari, Arnoldists, Free Brethren, and a crowd of enthusiasts nameless, or named only in contempt, scattered themselves through Europe. But the evil was transient. They had the Scriptures in their hands. The word of sacred soberness subdued their extravagance, while it confirmed their Christian fortitude. They went out like colonists of the desert; but they gradually softened down into civilization; and some of the noblest seeds of the Church were sown by those bold and irregular hands.

The preaching of the Waldenses was the true æra of the Reformation. Wickliff, Luther, and Calvin, were but the successors of the Barbes, in a nobler and more fortunate time. Literature,

civil freedom, the balance of the European governments, were the splendid auxiliaries that made their triumph at once comparatively easy and secure. The art of printing, that scarcely less than miracle, went before them like the pillar of fire through the wilderness; and the rest was conquest and possession by the command of Heaven.

The efforts of Rome to crush the infant Church shewed how keenly she felt her danger. A general rescript was issued by Innocent the IIId. to all the Lords of the South, to the French King, and to the nation, to take up arms against the Reformed. A Crusade was proclaimed, with the promise of the privileges, temporal and spiritual, hitherto confined to those who fought for the recovery of Jerusalem[81]. An army of half a million of men marched under the Papal banner, led by the Abbot of the Cistercians. Count Raymond was overwhelmed by this "flood" of desperate fanaticism. He was forgiven only on the insulting conditions, of standing naked to the shirt at the gate of the Cathedral; prostrating himself at the feet of the Legate; and taking the cross against his own people.

But the sword must be fed. Raymond, the

[81] Ranken, v. iii.

nephew of the Count, himself lord of an extensive territory, had refused to abandon his subjects to the mercies of the Pope. The whole weight of the crusade was flung upon him. Beziers, his capital, was stormed, and its twenty-three thousand inhabitants were put to the sword. On this occasion was uttered one of those memorably ferocious expressions which pass into portraitures of men and their times. Some hesitation had arisen before the assault, as to the fate of the Romish inhabitants who might have remained in the town. "Kill all," was the comprehensive answer of the Abbot, "God will find out who belong to him."

The Count of Thoulouse was at length forced into the field. His nephew had been taken prisoner, and was dead. Simon de Montfort, a man of blood, had resolved on the seizure of Raymond's territory, and entered it with fire and sword. But the whole south suddenly rose against him; he was defeated; and the war became fierce, general, and doubtful. The south was covered with slaughter; the deaths of the Albigeois were often sternly repaid. De Montfort was killed in 1218, at the siege of Thoulouse. Count Raymond died, and dying, left his wrongs, and more than his resolution, to his son. But the whole power of France, headed by Lewis the VIIIth,

at length closed upon him; and, in 1229, hostilities ended by a treaty, which merged the territory of the Counts of Thoulouse in the royal dominions. The war cost a million of lives.

In our fortunate country, the power of the Romish Church has so long perished, that we find some difficulty in conceiving the nature, and still more in believing the tyranny of its dominion. The influence of Monks, and the murders of the Inquisition, have passed into a nursery tale; and we turn with a generous, yet rash and most unjustifiable scepticism from the history of Romish authority. Through almost the entire of Italy, through the Flemish dominions of Germany, through a large portion of France, and through the entire of Spain, a great monastic body was established, which, professing a secondary and trivial obedience to the sovereign, gave its first and real obedience to the Pope. The name of spiritual homage cloaked the high-treason of an oath of allegiance to a foreign monarch; and whoever might be king of France, or Spain, the Pope was king of the Dominicans. All the other monastic orders were so many Papal outposts. But the great Dominican Order, immensely opulent in its pretended poverty; formidably powerful in its hypocritical disdain of earthly influence; and remorselessly ambitious, turbulent, and cruel in its pri-

mitive zeal; was an actual lodgement and province of the Papacy, an inferior Rome, in the chief European kingdoms.

In the closest imitation of Rome, this spiritual Power had fiercely assumed the temporal sword; the Inquisition was army, revenues, and throne in one. With the racks and fires of a tribunal worthy of the gulph of darkness and guilt from which it rose, the Dominicans bore Popery in triumph through Christendom, crushing every vestige of religion under the wheels of its colossal idol. The subjugation of the Albigenses in 1229 had scattered the Church; the shock of the great military masses was past; a subtler and more active force was required to destroy the wandering people of God; and the Inquisition multiplied itself for the work of death. This terrible tribunal set every principle, and even every form of justice at defiance. Secrecy, that confounds innocence with guilt, was the spirit of its whole proceeding. All its steps were in darkness. The suspected revolter from Popery was seized in secret, tried in secret, never suffered to see the face of accuser, witness, advocate or friend, was kept unacquainted with the charge, was urged to criminate himself; if tardy, was compelled to this self-murder by the rack; if terrified, was only the

more speedily murdered for the sport of the multitude. From the hour of his seizure he never saw the face of day, until he was brought out as a public show, a loyal and festal sacrifice, to do honour to the entrance of some travelling viceroy, some new married princess, or, on more fortunate occasions, to the presence of the sovereign. The dungeons were then drained, the human wreck of the torture and scourge were gathered out of darkness, groupes of misery and exhaustion with wasted forms and broken limbs, and countenances subdued by pain and famine into idiotism, and despair, and madness; to feed the fires round which the Dominicans were chaunting the glories of Popery, and exulting in the destruction of the body for the good of the soul!

But there were instances in which the power of truth gave vigour to the dying moments, and the victim put his torturers to shame. Of those but one shall be alluded to, from its comprehending the chief features of those dreadful sacrifices.

On the return of Philip II. from Flanders in 1559, by Valladolid, the Inquisition of the city determined to give their king the highest indulgence of his nature and their religion. The whole pomp of the Spanish court was displayed,—the king, his son, his sister, the prince of Parma,

three ambassadors, a crowd of dukes, commanders of military orders, bishops, grandees, women of rank, with the tribunals, councils and other authorities; and, as the grand master of the ceremonies, the archbishop of Seville, Inquisitor General. The first martyr was Don Carlos de Seso, a noble of Verona, son of the bishop of Placenza, distinguished for learning, an eminent servant of Charles V. and a judge. The German reformation had converted him, and he had devoted himself to spreading the Gospel; he was seized, thrown into a secret prison, and after a confinement of a year and a half, was suddenly told that he was to die. He called for pen and paper, and wrote his belief, which was completely scriptural. He said that "the belief of the Church of Rome was corrupted for centuries, that he would die in the faith of the Gospel, and that he offered himself to God in memory of the suffering of Christ." "It would be difficult," says the narrator, himself a Spaniard, a priest, and an inquisitor, "to express the vigour and energy of his writing, which filled two sheets of paper[52]."

De Seso's conversion was attempted twice that night by the monks; but he was firm, and his

[52] Llorente H. Inquis.

manliness was so much dreaded that he was brought to the pile gagged, lest he should preach to the people. As he was fastened to the stake, a last effort was made to convert or to disgrace him; he was exhorted to acknowledge Popery. To this insult he replied, with noble constancy, and in a firm and uplifted voice, "If I had time, I should convince you that you are lost by not following my example. Now, be quick, and light the wood that is to burn me." The pile was lighted, and he died.

In the original establishment of the Inquisition in 1198, it had raged against the Vaudois and their converts. But the victims were exhausted; or not worth the pursuit of a tribunal which looked to the wealth as keenly as to the faith of the persecuted. Opulence and heresy were at length to be found only in Spain; and there the Inquisition turned with a gigantic step. In the early disturbances of the Peninsula, the Jews, by those habits of trade, and mutual communion, which still make them the lords of commerce, had acquired the chief wealth of the country. The close of the Moorish war in the 15th century had left the Spanish monarch at leisure for extortion; and he grasped at the Jewish gains in the spirit of a robber, as he pursued his plunder with the cruelty of a barbarian. The Inquisition was the

great machine, the comprehensive torturer, ready to squeeze out alike the heart and the gold. In 1481, an edict was issued against the Jews; before the end of the year, in the single diocese of Cadiz, two thousand Jews were burned alive! The fall of the kingdom of Grenada in 1492 threw the whole of the Spanish Moors into the hands of the King. They were cast into the same furnace of plunder and torture. Desperate rebellions followed; they were defeated and, in 1609, were finally exiled. "In the space of one hundred and twenty-nine years, the Inquisition deprived Spain of three millions of inhabitants[53]."

On the death of Leo X. in 1521, Adrian, the Inquisitor General, was elected Pope. He had laid the foundations of his Papal celebrity in Spain. "It appears, according to the most moderate calculation, that during the five years of the ministry of Adrian, 24,025 persons were condemned by the Inquisition, of whom one thousand six hundred and twenty were burned alive[54]."

In 1517, Luther began to preach the Gospel. The earliest violences of the Inquisition had been directed to the Bible; and the edict of the council of Thoulouse, in 1229, had forbidden the laity to read it in their own tongue. The Bible, thus

[53] Llorente. [54] Ibid.

shut up in a dead language, had passed away from the hands of man; or was retained only by refugees, at the peril of their lives. Luther had at length found it, and flashed this living torch of light and hope in the eyes of the Popedom. The Inquisition was instantly up in arms. All the translated Scriptures, all the Commentaries suspected of the pollution of a Protestant pen, were prohibited. But the rage was not confined to Lutheran translations. The BIBLE itself was the enemy, in whatever language. The Oriental professors, in the chief seat of Spanish theology, Salamanca, were commanded, on pain of excommunication, to give up their *Greek* and *Hebrew* Bibles to the Holy Office! In the year 1558, the "terrible law" of Philip II. was published, which decreed confiscation and *death* for all who should sell, buy, keep, or read, any of the books prohibited by the Holy Office[55]. Even penitents at confession were compelled to denounce the transgressors of the edict; and in this hideous aggravation of tyranny, which turned a professed act of religion into an act of blood, and armed child and parent against the life of each other, the Pope was a fellow conspirator with the king and the Inquisition; the law was sanctioned by a bull issued in 1559.

[55] Llorente H. Inq.

This was an æra of activity. An additional document of the utter darkness and slavery of conscience demanded by Popery was furnished in the ordinance of Valdez, the Inquisitor General, in the same year. His "catalogue" prohibited "all Hebrew books, and those in other tongues treating of the Jewish customs; all Arabic, or treating of Mahometanism; all works written or translated by a heretic, or an individual condemned by the Holy Office; all works in Spanish with a preface, letter, glossary, comment, &c. by a heretic; all unpublished MSS. sermons, writings, treatises on Christianity, its sacraments, and its Scriptures," &c. "Such is the age," says Perez del Prado, the successor of Valdez, "that some men have carried their audacity to the *execrable extremity* of demanding permission to *read* the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue, without fearing to encounter *mortal poison* therein."

A prophetic character of the Inquisition had been—its claim of independent authority. It was already too strong for even the Pope. Sixtus V. a wild and tyrannic man, but a scholar; in one of those fits of eccentricity, which in such men sometimes strike across the whole settled order of things, had published an Italian Bible. The Spanish world was on flame. The cardinals

of Spain demanded the king's interposition against this inconceivable breach of the constitutional law of Popery. From the time of Leo X., by the index of the council, and by the inquisitions of Rome and Madrid, all works of doctrine in the vulgar tongue had been prohibited. Philip ordered his ambassador, Olivarez, to remonstrate with the Pope on the fatal effects of publishing the Scriptures. Sixtus, furious alike in good and ill, threatened to hang Olivarez on the spot. But his resistance was subdued in a more noiseless way, familiar to the land of absolutions and inquisitions. The Pope was poisoned; and the poison was said to have been administered by order of the king. The Sixtine Bible was condemned.

The Holy Office was now the dictator of Europe. No matter what was in the field, it fell before the mace of the Inquisition. The eight bishops and nine doctors of theology sent by Spain to the council of Trent, as the élite of her scholarship and Church, were all seized by the tribunal on the moment of their return. The sound of the Lutheran preaching was presumed to have polluted their allegiance to the infallibility of Rome and persecution. The archbishop of Toledo, the first ecclesiastic of Spain, the celebrated Carranza, was cast into prison, and

died, after a confinement of eighteen years, and a trial of nearly the same duration[56]. But Popery had a still higher mark. Neither the most eminent rank, nor even the most unhallowed zeal, could be a shield against the all-grasping ambition of Rome; Charles V. the greatest monarch of Europe, and Philip II. the darkest of all its bigots, were struck by the same blow.

It is the constant sophism of those who would cast Christianity bound hand and foot at the mercy of her enemies, that the Pope desires to exercise no interference in the internal concerns of kingdoms; that, if he had the desire, he has not the power; and that, if he possessed the power, he would be resisted by the whole body of the national clergy. For the exposure of this traitorous delusion, we are to look to the times, when it was the will of Popery to put forth its strength; not to the present, when it is its will to lull us into a belief of its consistency with the constitution, in defiance of common sense, common experience, the spirit of British law, and the loud warnings of insulted and hazarded religion.

In 1555 Paul IV. was raised to the Papal throne. Ambitious of forming a house among

[56] The documents fill twenty-four volumes in folio, of from 1000 to 1200 pages each.

the Italian princes, he determined to overthrow the emperor and his son. At the age of seventy-nine, he plunged into negociations with France, for the invasion of Italy, Sicily, and the Empire; and prepared bulls of excommunication against Charles as a heretic and favourer of heretics, depriving him of the Imperial crown, and his son of the kingdom of Naples; and further releasing the people of Spain, Italy, and Germany, from their oaths of allegiance.

Charles, feeling his danger, collected the opinions of the famous Melchior Cano, and other jurists, to sustain him against the anathema. They decided that it was lawful to resist the Papal ordinance. The Pope ordered the jurists to be seized by the Inquisition. His order was sustained by almost the whole body of the Spanish prelates, with the archbishop, who had been Philip's preceptor, at their head. They obeyed their Master, and rebelled against their King!

Philip, then in England, wrote upon this occasion to his sister, the Regent of Spain, a letter remarkable for its relation to English Protestantism.

"Since I informed you of the conduct of the Pope, and of the news from Rome, I have learnt that his holiness proposes to excommunicate the Emperor and me; to put my states under an in-

terdict, and to prohibit divine service. Having consulted learned men on the subject, it appears that it is only an abuse of the power of the sovereign Pontiff, founded on hatred and passion, certainly not provoked by our conduct; but that we are not obliged to submit in respect of our persons on account of the great scandal which would be caused by our confessing ourselves guilty, and the great sin which we should commit in so doing. In consequence, it has been decided, that if I am interdicted from certain things, I am not obliged to deprive myself of them, as those who are excommunicated; though a censure may be sent to me from Rome, according to the disposition of his holiness. *For, after having destroyed the sects in England, brought the country under the influence of the Church, pursued and punished the heretics without ceasing*, and obtained a success which has been constant, I see that his holiness evidently wishes to ruin my kingdom[57]." The letter concludes with for-

[57] It is a striking exemplification of the honesty of this religion of the Jesuit and the Monk, that while Philip was laying up this store of merit with Rome, by secretly stimulating the persecution of the English protestants, he was publickly the abhorrer of all violence. In the midst of the burnings in Smithfield, his confessor, Alphonso di Castro was ordered to mount the pulpit, and exonerate his master. The Monk's sermon of the 10th of February 1555 was a model of charity, he asked,—

bidding the reception of the Papal rescripts in Spain[58].

Paul IV. had tempted the French king to war; but the ruinous battle of St. Quentin in 1557 broke up the league; and the Pope was left to the wrath of the duke of Alva, who marched from his vice-royalty of Naples full on Rome. Alva habitually forgot his superstition, when he put on his sword; and would have made a memorable example of the hoary disturber, who, now deserted by every ally, was crouching at his feet. But Philip restrained the indignant grandee; made a treaty with the Pope on lenient terms, and put the chain round his own neck once more. Within less than six months, Paul flung the treaty and its author into public contempt, by an edict to the Spanish Inquisitor, to revive all his orders against heretics of every rank, "including *Princes, Kings,* and *Emperors.*" The names of Charles and Philip were not pronounced; but it was notorious that the brand was for their foreheads.

"How was it possible that any human being, much less any Christian, could desire to force conviction? How was the sword compatible with human reason," &c. The whole nation wondered, but were still wisely incredulous.

Philip's letter has unfortunately escaped the diligence of the English champions of Popery.

[58] Llorente.

Of the multitudes who perished by the Inquisition throughout the world, no authentic record is now discoverable. But wherever Popery had power, there was the tribunal. It had been planted even in the east, and the Portuguese Inquisition of Goa was, till within these few years, fed with many an agony. South America was partitioned into provinces of the Inquisition; and with a ghastly mimickry of the crimes of the mother state, the arrivals of viceroys, and the other popular celebrations were thought imperfect without an Auto-da-fe. The Netherlands were one scene of slaughter from the time of the decree which planted the Inquisition among them. In Spain the calculation is more attainable. Each of the *seventeen* tribunals during a long period burned annually on an average ten miserable beings! We are to recollect that this number was in a country where persecution had for ages abolished all religious differences, and where the difficulty was not to find the stake, but the offering. Yet, even in Spain, thus gleaned of all heresy, the Inquisition could still swell its list of murders to thirty-two thousand! The numbers burned in effigy, or condemned to penance, punishments generally equivalent to exile, confiscation, and taint of blood, to all ruin but the mere loss of worthless life,

amounted to three hundred and nine thousand [59]. But the crowds who perished in dungeons, of the torture, of confinement, and of broken hearts; the millions of dependant lives made utterly helpless, or hurried to the grave by the death of the victims, are beyond all register; or recorded only before HIM, who has sworn that "He who leadeth into captivity, shall go into captivity: and he that killeth with the sword, shall be killed by the sword [60]."

Such was the Inquisition, declared by the Spirit of God to be at once the offspring and the *image* of the Popedom. To feel the force of the parentage, we must look to the time. In the thirteenth century, the Popedom was at the summit of mortal dominion; it was independant of all kingdoms; it ruled with a rank of influence never before or since possessed by a human sceptre; it was the acknowledged sovereign of body and soul; to all earthly intents its power was immeasurable for good or evil. It might have spread literature, peace, freedom, and Christianity to the ends of Europe, or the world. But its nature was hostile; its fuller triumph only disclosed its fuller evil; and, to the shame of human reason, and the terror and suffering of human virtue, Rome, in the hour of its consummate gran-

[59] Llorente. [60] Apoc. xiii. 10.

deur, teemed with the monstrous and horrid birth of the INQUISITION!

THE SEVEN PUNISHMENTS OF THE PERSECUTORS.

"And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.

"And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

"And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

"And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

"And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound[60]."

I. THE ITALIAN AND FRENCH WARS.

The ruins of the Albigeois villages were scarcely cold, and the Inquisition had scarcely commenced the pursuit of their unfortunate exiles, when a tremendous visitation fell upon the whole of the Papal world. It first smote the first persecutors, Italy and France, in the shape of anarchy and war.

[60] Apoc. viii. 2, &c.

[A.D. 1301.] The insolence of a French bishop to his king had provoked an order for his arrest. The bishop was a legate; and the Pope, Boniface VIII., of whom it has been said that, as Gregory VII. seemed the most usurping of mankind, till Innocent III. appeared, so Innocent was thrown into the shade by the enormous audacity of Boniface; instantly launched a bull declaring himself King of kings, in temporals as well as spirituals, and ordering the French monarch to attend his presence at Rome. Philip the fair was a soldier, and his temper was stung by this insult in the face of Europe; he ordered the bull to be burnt in the streets of Paris, and summoned the first meeting of the States general to sustain him in the results of his hazardous defiance of the Head of Christendom. Boniface summoned an antagonist council, and promulgated the memorable bull "Unam sanctam," a summary of the sovereign law of Popery, declaring that "under the command of the Head of the Church are *two swords,* the spiritual and the temporal; and that the subjection of *every human being* to the see of Rome is a necessary article of salvation[61]." This supreme law was fitly followed by

[61] "Porro subèsse Romano pontifici, omni humanæ creaturæ declaramus, dicimus, definimus et pronunciamus, omnino esse de necessitate fidei." (Extrav. l. i.) Hallam, II. 324.

the excommunication of the king, and the offer of his crown to Albert I., Emperor of Germany. Philip fiercely anticipated the execution of his sentence, by a measure which, in that age, seemed beyond the daring of man. De Nogaret, one of those, who, in the unsettled professional demarcation of the time, combined the Jurist and the Soldier, was sent to strike at the Papal person. He found Boniface unguarded in Anagni, a village near Rome. The Pope was seized by this resolute agent, but soon after rescued by the inhabitants; yet the insult had sunk into his fiery soul, and he died of indignation within three days. Clement V, the next Pope but one, corrupted or alarmed by Philip, removed the throne to Avignon.

This was the first shock to the Supremacy. Rome was abandoned during seventy years to the furious excesses of baronial factions, peasant tumults, and all the dilapidation of morals, property, and order, included in the absence of a customary throne. But a still more formidable evil to the Papacy was the European scorn which began to spring out of the open abasement and notorious demoralization of the Papal court at Avignon. The "Seventy years' captivity," as it was termed by the Italians in mingled contempt and shame, was followed by the "Great Schism,"

in which rival Popes contested the robe of St. Peter; treachery, bribery, and bloodshed, were the instruments of election and government; and three *Infallibles* at once raised the laughter of the world!

France had been made the punisher of Rome. She was now to feel her share in the visitation. The claim of Edward III. to the French throne through his mother, Isabel, sister of the late king, Charles IV., involved France and England in a war inflamed by all the fury of barbarism, personal hatred, and the general profligate cruelty of the time. It raged through almost a century and a half. It swept away, as with a scythe, the successive generations of the French nobility; and finally left the whole of that great country covered with ruin.

A.D. 1348. A still more terrific evil suddenly appeared in the midst of this havoc of armies. The universal flight of the Levant traders brought the first intelligence of the coming of the Great Plague. It flowed over Europe with the regular and resistless advance of a sea. Wave on wave of death covered the successive kingdoms. In the improved science and habits of our age perhaps no imagination can conceive the horrors of pestilence in the fourteenth century. All was despair; whole cities and provinces were

depopulated; where human life was still left, its precariousness maddened men into fierce riot, or savage disregard of the common ties of nature; Europe was one vast scene of mingled agony and licentiousness, superstitious terror, and blasphemous outrage. Like the locusts, the time of the plague in each land was about five months; when it had destroyed all that it was to slay in the south and west, it passed onwards; and in 1350 turned the north into a grave.

II. The Defeat of the Armada.

A.D. 1588. In the tumults of France, Spain had grown powerful beyond rivalry; and with her power, by the inevitable law of Popish states, had grown her religious cruelty. She was now to feel in a single blow the guilt of the Inquisition. England, raised to be the head of Protestantism, was marked out by Philip II. for vengeance. "The point," says the historian "on which he rested his highest glory, the perpetual object of his policy, was to support orthodoxy and exterminate heresy; and as the power and credit of Elizabeth were the chief bulwark of the Protestants, he hoped if he could subdue that princess, to acquire the eternal renown of reuniting the whole Christian world in the Catholic communion[62]." The "Invincible Armada" was launched.

[62] Hume, vol. v. 331.

Its building had occupied the treasures and the labour of the Spanish empire for three years. Troops from Italy, Germany, Flanders, and Spain, were embarked, or sent to the points from which they might be thrown on England. The Spanish nobles volunteered. Men of the highest rank in the Popish realms solicited employment; the first sea officer of the age, the Marquis Santa Croce, whose very name seemed an omen, commanded the fleet; the first general of the age, the Prince of Parma, marched the Spanish army, 34,000 of the most celebrated troops in Europe, down to the Flemish shore for the invasion. The fleet numbered one hundred and thirty ships of war, carrying thirty thousand troops and seamen. But it had a darker freight of monks, Papal bulls, and instruments of torture.

The heroism of England in that time of trial deserves a place among the noblest recollections of a land of liberty and valour. But even then the victory was felt to belong to a higher arm. The war was the assault, less of Spain, than of Rome, against England; of religious tyranny against religious freedom; of sullen imposture and sanguinary persecution against Christianity. The Inquisition, not satiated with its dominion over the land, had lately usurped the sea. A tribunal was established on board the Spanish

fleets[63]. England conquered would have been not simply the appanage of Spain, and involved in the general misgovernment, beggary, and ignorance of the native kingdom of sloth and superstition; it would have been the especial conquest of the Inquisition; the very victim which monkery had longed above all others to lay bare and cut to the heart; a vast, untasted prey for the burning jaws on which the gore of the continent had begun to dry. The zeal of Philip would have then found bolder witness than a letter. The Inquisition would have disdained the hypocrisy of the secret rack. The whole Popish vengeance would have been fearlessly developed in the death of law, liberty, and religion. The Dominican would have sat upon the British throne; and sat in robes crimson with the blood of all that was generous and brave, and learned and holy in the land. Rome would be all in all. England would be a funeral pile.

But, if in that hour the veil were taken from the eyes of man, he would, like the servant of the prophet, have seen England guarded by the horses and chariots of fire. Wreck, burning, and capture,—man and the elements, were let loose upon the gigantic force that had come to

[63] Chandler, Hist. of Persecutions.

defy the living God. The Armada was undone; and with it the crown of Spain was cloven. The intrinsic strength of Spain made decay tardy, but it was inevitable; and from the day of her defeat by England, she was marked for the alternate prize and victim of European war.

III. The War of the Cevennes.

A.D. 1685. The power of England, established by this great victory, made her the universal champion of Protestantism. The Popish kingdoms shrank from provoking the resentment of a country which had thus splendidly shown the impotence of all external hostility. The Church in France thenceforth continued undisturbed, but by the private jealousies and provocations of the Monks. But the accession of Charles II., a Popish hypocrite and a French slave, degraded England, and stripped Protestantism abroad of sword and shield.

The Church in France had increased rapidly under the reigns of Henry IV. and Louis XIII. At the beginning of the reign of Louis XIV. it amounted to two millions and a half, incomparably the most industrious, intelligent, and orderly portion of the people. Its clergy were distinguished for piety and learning. It had 626 places of worship, and 647 ministers.

Protestantism is a safe religion in either master or subject; for the Christian honours the laws for conscience sake. The Huguenots were eminently loyal during the period from the edict of Nantes in 1589 to the beginning of the persecutions under Louis XIV. They have even the testimony of Louis to their unimpeachable allegiance. In a letter to Cromwell, who had desired that the Duke of Savoy, in his cruelties to the Vaudois, should not be suffered to expect encouragement from France, the king stated, "that it was not likely that he would co-operate in inflicting any punishment on the subjects of the duke of Savoy, on account of their attachment to the pretended reformed religion, seeing he conferred so many tokens of favour on his own subjects of the same religious profession. For he had reason to *applaud their fidelity and zeal in his service.* They omitted no opportunity of giving him evidence of their loyalty, *even beyond all that could be imagined,* contributing in all things to the advantage of his affairs[61]."

Laws against religion are justifiable, only where that religion is made a political engine; where under the pretence of pious zeal treason lurks, and where a hatred to the recognized es-

[61] Ranken, Hist. France, VIII. 270.

tablishments of the state, and an alliance with its foreign enemies are principles. The rebel must be restrained, let his pious pretence for rebellion be what it will. But the spirit of persecution waits for none of those things.

Within five years from this testimony to the pacific and obedient conduct of its protestant subjects, the government commenced a course of the most galling irritation. Every year some new drop of bitterness was instilled into the wound of the last, until the whole calamity was completed by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

On the 22d of October 1685, the decree of revocation announced,—

1. A repeal of the whole Edict of 1598, and of every concession in favour of the reformed; with a declaration that their Churches should be demolished.

2. A prohibition of meeting for worship in any place or under any pretence.

3. An express interdict of every kind of religious exercise in the houses of those among the reformed of high rank or noble birth under pain of *confiscation* and *death*.

4. The banishment of all their ministers from the kingdom within fifteen days, unless they became Roman Catholics.

5. An offer of a third more than their stipend to those ministers who would conform, with a continuation of it to their widows.

6. An offer of admission to the profession of the law three years sooner than the regular time.

7. The absolute shutting up of all their schools.

8. The baptism of their children by the Popish priests under a penalty of 500 livres.

9. Permission by the king's clemency for the refugees, if returned within four months, and converted to Popery, to recover their property and privileges.

10. A prohibition of leaving the kingdom under the penalty of the gallies or death.

11. The decrees against the relapsed were to be put in execution; but those who were not decided or prepared to declare themselves, might remain where they resided, until it pleased God to enlighten them, continue their trade or arts, and enjoy their property without being disturbed, provided they refrained *from all exercise of their religion*, and from every kind of meeting on that account[65]."

The apparent lenity of the final article, which yet utterly prohibited the exercise of that religion in which was all the hope of the reformed,

[65] Ranken, Hist. France, VIII. 277.

was soon found to be no defence. Hired informers were sent among the people. Soldiers hunted them down like wild beasts and shot them. Their houses were burned, their property was plundered, their families were treated with the cruellest indignities; many were tortured, many of their more important persons were sent for galley-slaves[66]. Above a million of people fled into the Protestant countries, carrying with them their arts, industry and manufactures to strangers. The loss to France in wealth was immense; but in character, honour, and religion was incalculable.

The difficulty of even this unhappy escape became at length so great, that the reformed in the south took up arms for the mere preservation of their lives. Success encreased their numbers, and the war of the Camisards began. The whole mountain country of the Cevennes became the seat of a severe conflict. The king's troops were harassed and defeated in a long series of encounters by the undisciplined valour of a peasantry who fought the battle of despair. This southern La Vendée raged during four years[67]. The Cevennes was the grave of a multitude of the

[66] See the very curious and melancholy narratives of Marolles and Lefevre.

[67] Memoirs of Colonel Cavalier.—Ranken, &c.

persecutors. The Dragonnade was sternly repaid. The government finally found the necessity of gentler means; partial pacifications were offered; and it is perfectly probable that the comparative quiet of the remaining protestants, during the century, was largely due to the exploits of the men of the Cevennes.

But the persecution was to be retaliated by a deeper, though more circuitous, vengeance. Some links of the chain are traceable. It may be beyond human eyes to see how far they still extend. The first result was the encouragement of William III. to attempt the English throne. Holland had received with generous hospitality a vast number of the refugees. Many of them were military, they had among them distinguished officers, and William thus found himself in possession of a most valuable body of troops; he obtained an allowance for their pay from the States; and prepared for invasion.

Another striking result was its effect on the mind of England. The notorious connection of James II. with Rome had already prepossessed the nation against the Stuarts. But this fearful developement of the natural heart of Popery; the cries that came on every wind across the Channel; the spectacle of the unhappy Emigrants, flung on the British shores, worn out

with flight and disease, terror and wounds; and those men, their fellow Christians, bound by the closest tie of faith; and those sufferings undergone for the purest cause of Christianity; put an end to all the insidious glosses and flatteries of Priest or King. The warning trumpet had been blown. Within three years from the Revocation, the Stuarts were driven into eternal exile; and William was placed on the throne, to be the Champion of the Church throughout Europe, and the leading enemy of France!

Another, and still sterner result, was the national impurity; which, at length, after undermining, and consuming away the foundations of the public strength, flamed out in the French Revolution.

IV. The Wars of Louis XIV.

A.D. 1688. In the Providential Government of Eurbpe, France seems to have been appointed to the punishment of the Continental kingdoms, and England to that of France.

From the Reformation in 1517, a long train of violences had been committed by the Continental Sovereigns against Protestantism. A multitude of pious and learned men had been sacrificed by the most cruel torments. Fierce hostilities had followed, and the "Thirty years' war," signalized by

the heroism and fall of Gustavus Adolphus, gave a formidable lesson of the precariousness of the Imperial power. But the death of the illustrious Swede at Lutzen left the Church once more exposed to the severities of Ferdinand II. and his successors.

The other Popish states were not less stained. The persecutions of the Vaudois, who still lingered in Savoy; and the merciless spirit that had nearly exterminated all knowledge of the Scriptures in Italy and Spain; deeply justified the vengeance that was now about to fall upon the persecutors.

A.D. 1679. The peace of Nimeguen had raised Louis to the highest point of his prosperity. In all that constitutes the brilliancy of nations, nature has given the people of France singular advantages. By an universal acknowledgment, they have long led the more graceful tastes of Europe. Their skill in the arts of life, their general accomplishment, and their national urbanity, ought to have made their history the happiest of the world. It rivals the most unfortunate. Their unquestionable bravery, their love of enterprize, and their physical qualities for soldiership, ought to have made their successes the most secure; yet no nation has wasted its blood with such fruitless gallantry, or has been so often forced to feel the

bitterest reverses of fortune. Louis had scarcely celebrated his triumph, and laid the foundation of a still more honourable triumph in his famous Academies; than he was summoned to a war, extensive, furious, and finally disastrous beyond any visitation of France since the times of the Edwards. Prophecy assigns the cause.

The first steps of Louis had been turned to the extinction of the Church. "He published regulations, calculated to discourage the Protestants, and sent missionaries into those districts where they most abounded, to instruct and convert them[68]." But those instructors were soon followed by missionaries of a less equivocal character. Regiments of cavalry were sent to scour the country, and Dauphiné and the adjoining provinces were the scene of ferocious licence. The final subversion of the Church followed; and Louis exulted in the policy which had purified his kingdom of every man who read the Bible.

In the midst of this extirpation of the *heretics*, Louis sprang from a couch, on which even the morals of France looked with shame, to send desolation through Germany. The burning of the Palatinate was an act of horror; but it stirred the heart of Europe against France; to the states of the Empire it was the fire of a beacon; it

[68] Ranken, VIII. 154.

roused them all to arms. Yet the first irruption of the French armies has always been irresistible; and Germany was overrun. The troops of Spain and Savoy were next broken; and if the sufferings of the persecuted Church in Germany were to be atoned by the general havoc of the Continent, the atonement was given by the unsparing sword and firebrand of the French invasion.

A.D. 1700. The war was roused again by the struggle for the succession to the Spanish throne. The Continent was again devastated; Italy, Germany, and Spain, became the theatre of long and desperate slaughters.

At length, England put forth her strength, and sent a General to the field, who has since had but one rival; and him, too, summoned to a conflict with the same enemy; displaying, from the beginning of his career, the same unquestioned superiority over all its vaunted leaders; and consummating the war with the same acknowledged supremacy of the arms of his country.

Yet the aspect of war since the last age has so much deepened, its chances have so much more involved the life and death of nations, that all the past grows pale in contrast with the perils and glories of the present. If military renown is to be measured by the difficulties overcome, by

the magnitude and completeness of the success, and by the mighty name of the vanquished; it is no dishonour to the noblest prowess of England in the days of our fathers, to give the first rank to that generous valour, exhaustless public spirit, and lofty devotion to truth, liberty, and religion, which stopped a torrent of conquest swelled with the strength of Europe; redeemed kingdoms; overthrew from its foundations the most powerful military empire since the days of Rome; and, finally, hand to hand, wrested the sword from the grasp, and the diadem from the brow of NAPOLEON!

V. & VI. THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

"And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.

"And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth[69]."

The primary cause of the French revolution was the exile of Protestantism.

Its decency of manners had largely restrained the licentious tendencies of the higher orders; its learning had compelled the Romish Ecclesi-

[69] Apoc. vii. 7, 8.

astics to similar labours; and while Christianity could appeal to such a Church in France, the progress of the Infidel writers was checked by the living evidence of the purity, peacefulness and wisdom of the Gospel. It is not even without sanction of Scripture and History to conceive that, the presence of such a body of the servants of God was a divine protection to their country.

But the fall of the Church was followed by the most palpable, immediate, and ominous change. The great names of the Romish priesthood, the vigorous literature of Bossuet, the majestic oratory of Massillon, the pathetic and classic elegance of Fenelon, the mildest of all enthusiasts; a race of men who towered above the genius of their country and of their religion; passed away without a successor. In the beginning of the eighteenth century the most profligate man in France was an Ecclesiastic, the Cardinal Dubois, prime minister to the most profligate prince in Europe, the Regent Orleans. The country was convulsed with bitter personal disputes between Jesuit and Jansenist, fighting even to mutual persecution upon points either beyond or beneath the human intellect. A third party stood by, unseen, occasionally stimulating each, but equally despising both, a potential Fiend, sneer-

ing at the blind zealotry and miserable rage that were doing its unsuspected will. Rome, that boasts of her freedom from schism, should blot the eighteenth century from her page.

The French mind, subtle, satirical, and delighting to turn even matters of seriousness into ridicule, was immeasurably captivated by the true burlesque of those disputes, the childish virulence, the extravagant pretensions, and the still more extravagant impostures fabricated in support of the rival pre-eminence in absurdity; the visions of half-mad nuns and friars; the Convulsionnaires; the *miracles* at the tomb of the Abbé Paris; trespasses on the common sense of man, scarcely conceivable by us if they had not been renewed under our eyes by Popery. All France was in a burst of laughter.

In the midst of this tempest of scorn an extraordinary man arose, to guide and deepen it into public ruin, VOLTAIRE; a personal profligate; possessing a vast variety of that superficial knowledge which gives importance to folly: frantic for popularity, which he solicited at all hazards; and sufficiently opulent to relieve him from the necessity of any labours but those of national undoing. Holding but an inferior and struggling rank in all the manlier provinces of the mind, in science, poetry, and philosophy; he was the

prince of scorners. The splenetic pleasantry which stimulates the wearied tastes of high life; the grossness which half concealed captivates the loose, without offence to their feeble decorum; and the easy brilliancy which throws what colours it will on the darker features of its purpose; made Voltaire the very genius of France. But under this smooth and sparkling surface, reflecting like ice all the lights flung upon it, there was a dark and fathomless depth of malignity. He hated government; he hated morals; he hated man; he hated religion. He sometimes bursts out into exclamations of rage and insane fury against all that we honour as best and holiest, that sound less the voice of human lips than the echoes of the final place of agony and despair.

A tribe worthy of his succession, showy, ambitious, and malignant, followed; each with some vivid literary contribution, some powerful and popular work, a new deposit of combustion in that mighty mine on which stood in thin and fatal security the throne of France.—Rousseau, the most impassioned of all romancers, the great corruptor of the female mind;—Buffon, a lofty and splendid speculator, who dazzled the whole multitude of the minor philosophers, and fixed the creed of Materialism.—Montesquieu, eminent for knowledge and sagacity; in his "Spirit of

Laws" striking all the establishments of his country into contempt; and in his "Persian Letters," levelling the same blow at her morals.—D'Alembert, the first mathematician of his day, an eloquent writer, the declared pupil of Voltaire, and, by his secretaryship of the French academy, furnished with all the facilities for propagating his master's opinions.—And Diderot, the projector and chief conductor of the Encyclopedie, a work justly exciting the admiration of Europe, by the novelty and magnificence of its design, and by the comprehensive and solid extent of its knowledge; but in its principles utterly evil, a condensation of all the treasons of the school of anarchy, the *lex scripta* of the Revolution.

All those men were open Infidels; and their attacks on religion, such as they saw it before them, roused the Gallican Church. But the warfare was totally unequal. The priesthood came armed with the antiquated and unwieldy weapons of old controversy, forgotten traditions and exhausted legends. They could have conquered them only by the Bible; they fought them only with the Breviary. The histories of the saints, and the wonders of images were but fresh food for the most overwhelming scorn. The Bible itself, which Popery has always laboured to close, was brought into the contest, and used resist-

lessly against the priesthood. They were contemptuously asked, in what part of the sacred Volume had they found the worship of the Virgin, of the Saints, or of the Host? where was the privilege that conferred Saintship at the hands of the Pope? where was the prohibition of the general use of Scripture by every man who had a soul to be saved? where was the revelation of that Purgatory, from which a monk and a mass could extract a sinner? where was the command to imprison, torture, and slay men for their difference of opinion with an Italian priest and the college of cardinals? To those formidable questions the clerics answered by fragments from the fathers, angry harangues, and more legends of more miracles. They tried to enlist the nobles and the court in a crusade. But the nobles were already among the most zealous, though secret, converts to the Encyclopedie; and the gentle spirit of the monarch was not to be urged into a civil war. The threat of force only inflamed contempt into vengeance. The populace of Paris, like all mobs, licentious, restless, and fickle; but beyond all taking an interest in public matters, had not been neglected by the deep designers who saw in the quarrel of the pen the growing quarrel of the sword. The Fronde was not yet out of their minds; the

barrier-days of Paris; the municipal council which in 1648 had levied war against the government; the mob-army which had fought, and terrified that government into forgiveness; were the strong memorials on which the anarchists of 1793 founded their seduction. The perpetual ridicule of the national belief was kept alive among them. The populace of the provinces, whose religion was in their rosary, were prepared for rebellion by similar means; and the terrible and fated visitation of France began.

The original triumph over the clergy was followed up with envenomed perseverance. The first licensed plunder was of the Church property; the first massacre was of the clergy[70]; an atrocious act, of itself enough to make the Revolution abhorred; during the war the rage of the republicans burned fiercest against the unfortunate remnant of their pastors; and, with the solitary and illustrious exception of the Vendée, they found no refuge within the borders of France. It is to the high honour of England that she opened her asylum to the fugitives, supplied their wants in the spirit of a liberal benevolence, and gave them the unostenta-

[70] At the Carmes, in 1792.

tious proof of the unwearied excellence of a religion raised on the foundation of the Bible.

Of all revolutions, that of France was the least accountable on the ordinary grounds of public overthrow. No disastrous war had shaken the system; no notorious waste of the public resources, no tyrannical master, no ruined finance. The whole deficit of the revenue was only 2,300,000*l.* sterling, a sum which should not have overwhelmed the poorest kingdom of Europe. The court was œconomical; the country was in profound peace; the great families were attached to the crown; the king was a man of singular lenity and liberality. He had granted much to the demands of the popular representatives, he was prepared to grant up to the fullest demands of rational freedom. Before a drop of blood was shed on the scaffold or in the field, France was in possession of the constitution, which after five and twenty years of suffering, she was rejoiced to reclaim.

The true cause was the want of solidity in the national belief. When a popular declaimer had sunk into contempt the impostures of a wonder-working image, or a picture that shed tears, opened its eyes, and healed diseases, the controversy was done; Popery had no deeper grasp upon the mind. The image was their deity, the legend was their

creed; when both perished, where was their religion? The declaimer next led them, exulting in their release from the thraldom of ancient prejudices, to look upon the golden temptations of revolt; the plunder of the Chapel kindled their thirst for the plunder of the Château; till with no principle to check, and the hottest stimulants of unholy appetite to madden them on, they rushed from minor rapine to the throne. But the fall of Christianity was the passion, original and supreme. The unhappy and innocent king was immolated on the altar of this monstrous anarchy; his queen, a noble being, whose beauty, heroic heart, and patient fortitude, would have won mercy from the savages of the desert, followed him in the long train of sacrifice. The monarchy was offered up. Still there was a more illustrious and more hated victim. The infidel philosophers had early and easily torn down the feeble belief of France; and the Gallican Church was no more. But the death of religion was the original bond of the great conspiracy. The slaughters of kings, nobles, and priests, were but the partial advances to its fulfilment. The Republic was at length enthroned. Power, resistless and remorseless, was in their hands; and in the midst of celebrations of prodigal pomp, immeasurable impurity, and blood flowing night and day from a hundred

scaffolds, they filled up their cup of horrors, and consummated their earliest pledge in the public abolition of Christianity.

A.D. 1797. The *death* of Christianity was local and limited; no nation of Europe joined in the desperate guilt of the French Republic, and within three years and a half, the *predicted* time, it was called up from the grave to a liberty which it had never before enjoyed; the Church in France was proclaimed free.

Simultaneous with this restoration, the Popedom received a wound, the sure precursor of its ruin.

In 1797, the French army under Bonaparte marched on Rome. Resistance was hopeless against the conqueror of the Austrians; and the treaty of Tolentino dismembered the Papal territory. Citizen Joseph Bonaparte was left ambassador from the Republic; and a pretended attack on his privileges furnished the necessary pretext for the breach of the treaty, the return of the army, and the seizure of Rome.

The announcement that the ambassador had left the city, alarmed the Vatican; and Rome had recourse to its highest protectors. Let those who disbelieve the extravagances of image-worship look to the narrative of Popery in the hour of its danger, the hour when all are sincere. The

Pope issued a summons to the people, to *walk in procession with three of the most sacred relics* of the Church of Rome; the Santo Volto, or portrait of our Lord, supposed to have been painted by miracle; the Santa Maria in Portico, a miraculous miniature of the Virgin and child; and the chains worn by St. Peter in prison[71]!

For attendance on this procession, and for some additional ceremonies, the Pope granted the remission of sins, as in the Jubilee.

For all who on the seven days after the procession should visit St. Peter's, reciting before those relics, which were then to have been placed on the high altar, the prayer "Ante oculos tuos, Domine," or in lieu of it the "Pater Noster," or "Ave-Maria," ten times, the Pope granted for each time in each day, an indulgence for ten years and forty days!

For all who should recite kneeling the seven Penitential Psalms, or the third part of the Rosary on each of those days, the Pope granted for each day an indulgence for seven years and forty days!

On the 9th of February, the French corps commanded by Berthier encamped in front of

[71] Duppa. Subversion of the Papal Government.

the Porta del Popolo. On the next day the castle of St. Angelo surrendered; the city gates were seized; and the Pope and the cardinals, excepting three, were made prisoners.

On the 15th, Berthier made his triumphal entry; delivered a harangue at the foot of the Capitol invoking the "shades of Cato, Pompey, Brutus, Cicero, and Hortensius, to receive the homage of free Frenchmen," on the soil of liberty; proclaimed Rome a Republic; and, declaring the suspension of every office of the old government, planted the tree of liberty.

Ten days after, the Pope was sent away under an escort of French cavalry, and was finally carried into France, where he died in captivity.

On the 20th of March, the act of federation was published in a fête. The consuls swore eternal hatred to monarchy, burned a paper containing emblems of royalty, the Tiara, &c. and established the union of the three Republics, Rome, the Cisalpine, and France. All that followed was insult, misery and plunder. The Papal palaces were sacked; the museums were robbed; the nobility were forced to sell their valuables at the caprice of the French; and the populace were famished, roused into insurrection, and slaughtered. The whole currency of Rome carried off; forced loans, even to the demand of the silver forks of

every family; a paper circulation, even down to a penny; the free quartering of French soldiery; and the innumerable nameless sufferings that belong to the presence of an invader, combined to make Rome taste the bitterness of slavery.

The seizure of the French throne by Napoleon, only gave Rome an imperial master. By a striking coincidence, the Papal territory had been conferred, and resumed by a French conqueror; and alike at the commencement and the close of his dominion the Pope had crossed the Alps to consecrate the sword, and place the crown upon the brow of an usurper.

The further detail of the revolutionary history is irrelevant to the purpose of this sketch, which contemplated merely the acting of Providence in the preservation of the Church, and the punishment of its oppressors.

Yet it is difficult to part from this period of strange and appalling vicissitude, without solemn admiration of the noble share which our country has borne in the liberation of Europe. And it is but a source of still more solemn admiration and prouder triumph, to believe that she has fought her way through the infinite hazards of the time, in the strength of a loftier guidance than the sword or counsel of man.

Why the Church, the chosen people of God, should have been the constant subject of depression on earth, justly admits of enquiry. The full answer may remain among the mysteries, reserved for our knowledge in a higher state; but some not insufficient reasons are easily discoverable.

The proverbial dangers of prosperity to individuals must extend to all communities; and the first corruption of the Church arose from its first security. But the two great bursts of persecution, the Pagan in the Apostolic æra, and the Popish in the thirteenth century, are accountable on peculiar grounds. The original converts had been born in idolatry, reared in idolatry, and after their conversion lived with idolatry on every side. Paganism offered strong temptations to our lower nature; the influence of habit, worldly interest, and family ties, were all in perpetual action against the new and remote hopes of Christianity. The Roman world, present, splendid, and sensual, was on the one hand; on the other, a world whose rewards were to be reached only through the grave. Perhaps nothing but that pressure of adversity, which sobers the human spirit, and forces it to look for strength beyond the world, could have finally divorced the great body of the converts from the temptations of

Paganism. But in the Persecution, they saw the true shape of that selfish, dark, and bloodthirsty malignity which lurked under the embroidered pageantries of the idolater; the strongest necessity for consolation from the Bible compelled them to its more fervent study; and in the loftier communication of their spirit with the Spirit of their Lord, they felt, and adored the mercy that drew an impassable line between them and Paganism, even with the sword.

The circumstances of the Albigeois were nearly the same. They had been born under Popish idolatry, they were reared with its altars fuming round them, they were tempted to its worship by habit, by interest, by family affections; like the early converts, they had been Pagans, differing from those of the day of Nero, only in the substitution of St. Peter for Mars or Jove. In the ordinary course, the world would have re-absorbed them, and the glories of the Gospel would have been eclipsed in eyes dazzled by the pomps and pleasures of a sensual religion; but the tempest, which longed to overwhelm them, was let loose; they were roused to feel their spiritual nakedness by the fury of Rome; they were driven to the shelter of the Gospel, and taught to rejoice in the Providential mercy of persecution.

The depression of the Church has continued. To this day it has borne no comparison in numbers, influence, or extent of dominion, with the Church of Rome. But actual persecution has ceased with its necessity. The districts of Protestantism and Popery have been so long and so distinctly separated, that the habits of idolatry have passed away from the Christian mind. Yet, if a great conversion should take place in Popish countries, we should probably see the roots of their old habits wrung out of the converts by the permitted rage of persecution. It is predicted, that such a persecution shall be among the distinguishing terrors of the coming time; but whether it shall immediately precede, as is most probable, or be mingled with the general convulsion, is not clearly revealed.

The Jewish œconomy, in its rise and progress, was typical[72] of Christianity; of its original suffering; the gradual corruption that was suffered to invade its doctrines; and the calling of a pure portion out of the national body of crime.

But a Scriptural type is more than a shadow; it is at once a picture and a *pledge* of the thing typified,—a *visible* prophecy that the event shall come. The dissolution of the Jewish govern-

[72] Archdeacon Nares on Types. Warburton Lecture.

ment and nation was the pledge of a more extensive dissolution, sanguinary and final. The date of this event may be, like that of the fall of Jerusalem, a secret in the bosom of Providence. Yet, as the disciples were then commanded to lift up their eyes to the signs of its coming; so may the command and the means be equally applicable to those among ourselves, who will desire unpresumptuously to search, and be prepared.

A very striking typical connexion to this effect, and which seems to have been overlooked, is traceable between our Lord's ministry, and the predicted career of the "Two Witnesses." (ch. xi.)

Our Lord preached in Judea three years and a half[73].

He was crucified in Jerusalem.

After three days he rose again.

At his rising there was an earthquake[74].

He remained on earth for a certain period after his conquest of the grave.

He ascended to heaven.

[73] Another conjecture, as to the time, has been lately offered. But the *duration* is not important to the typical connexion.

[74] Matt. xxviii. 2.

To this the history of the "two witnesses," or the preaching of the Scriptures under the Papacy, is a close parallelism, and evidently a designed one.

The Bible is preached in depression during three prophetic years and a half.

It is slain—"in the great city where our Lord was crucified," actually France, but with a direct reference of phrase to the place of our Lord's death.

In three prophetic days and a half it is raised again.

At its rising there is an earthquake.

It remains for a period "on its feet,"—in a state of greater security than before, but still unexalted.

It is summoned by the voice of God, and ascends to glory,—a scriptural figure for its diffusion through all nations.

Thus far the ministry of our Lord, in person, and his ministry by the Bible, have been parallel. And we may pursue the analogy as a key to the future. One of the most remarkable signs, by which the disciples were to discover the *immediate* approach of the fall of Jerusalem, was the propagation of the Gospel. "This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world

for a witness unto all nations; and then *shall the end* come[75]." There is sufficient reason to believe that, before the fall of Jerusalem, the Gospel was actually preached in the remotest portions of the world; and then came the end. The same extraordinary diffusion of the Gospel has taken place in our day to *the same extent*, and *for the first time* since the Pentecost. This diffusion has been effected, not simply by the labours of a single kingdom, but by a great combination of all the kingdoms of Europe out of the bondage of Popery, and by their dependencies and allies in the other quarters of the world. An operation of such extent, of such labour, of such singularity, and directed to a purpose of such matchless and holy use to man, rises altogether beyond the rank of human and temporal influences. It is a SIGN; and, like the first preaching by the gift of tongues, attests equally the presence of a spiritual energy, and the imminent coming of a great catastrophe.

Within thirty-six years from our Lord's death the consummation came. But, lest we should conceive that the original proportion of time between his ministry and that of the witnesses, of common years to prophetic, is to be preserved

[75] Matt. xxiv. 14.

in the period yet to come; it is declared that, the end shall be *quickly;* and the distinguishing facts, the French Revolution, the monastic influence, &c. are given by which its approach is capable of being ascertained.

We are now in the thirty-fourth year from the abolition of Christianity in France; and, if the analogy were to be exact, in two years would commence the general overthrow. But we have no right to determine strictly in matters future, and of this high import; a few years further may make no interval in the eye of Providence; and we may not improbably be left, like the disciples, to discover the time by that evidence of events which supplies its knowledge only to Christian humility, and disappoints and eludes the haughty vision of the wisdom of this world.

But the close of this stupendous subversion is declared in Daniel. "From the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. *Blessed* is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt *rest* and *stand in thy lot* at the end of the days[76]."

[76] Dan. xii. 11, 12, 13.

It is thus revealed to the prophet that he shall enter into his rest, the sabbath of the saints, and shall once more be a priest before the Lord, at the end of 1335 years from the abolition of the daily sacrifice. The actual abolition had occurred at various periods, from Nebuchadnezzar to Titus. But the temple service was a continual type of the Christian Church; and the true prophetic abolition of the daily sacrifice was when Popery abolished the purity of the Gospel, at the beginning of the 1260 years. That epoch is distinctly referred to; "And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever, that it shall be for a *time, times,* and *a half;* and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished[77]." The things, whose fulfilment was to commence at the end of the 1260 years, are the universal war, and the fall of Popery and its adherents. The prophet then asks, "O my Lord, what shall be *the end* of these things," (ver. 8.) and he is answered, that it shall be in 1335 prophetic days, or 75 years from the year 1793; in the year 1868.

[77] Dan. xii. 7.

The previous epoch of 1290 years is not declared to be connected with any event, and is probably but a boundary between the French Revolution and the preparatives for the final one, a warning that the trial is at length determined and approaching.

To this date of the peace of the Church may be objected the very ancient and natural analogy, by which, as the seventh day of the creation was the sabbath, with the seventh thousand should begin the sabbath of Christianity. But Chronology is still so imperfect a science, that all the early epochs are unsettled. There are no less than 200 dates offered for the creation, and a scarcely inferior number for the deluge. Even the date of the Nativity is still matter of dispute. The difference of 132 years sinks into nothing, compared with the enormous diversities assigned by Chronology. No argument can be shaken by objections derived from a science which remains the dishonour of literature.

So far as we can discover the ways of Providence, it acts by a system of general laws, interfered with from time to time by the will of the Deity for his immediate purposes of mercy. The ruin of a nation infected by a corrupt faith seems to follow the overthrow of that faith, by an established law. Of the peculiar religious corrup-

tion of mankind before the flood we have no certain knowledge, but it is clear that they had debased the original idea of God; and it is the natural working of the mind to invent a substitute; they and their false religion perished together. The idolatry of Canaan was proscribed; and the people were with their idolatry destroyed. The corruption of the Jewish covenant wrought its downfall; and with it the nation was destroyed. The fall of Roman Paganism was predicted by the Spirit of God; and with it the whole civil frame of the Western Empire, the seat of Paganism, was undone in the midst of boundless slaughter. The corrupt religion of the later Rome, the second shape of Paganism, must perish; and from the argument of all the past, independently of prophecy, its fall must involve a vast extent of sanguinary overthrow. But prophecy is explicit; and all language sinks under its fiery breathings of the fierce and resistless vengeance, the comprehensive and final ruin, that is to cover the Popedom from the eye of man.

The vengeance shall spread; the brutish idolatries and hideous cruelties of the Barbarian superstitions shall be enwrapped in the same cloud of wrath; and the earth be finally cleared by some great elemental agency, a deluge of flame, for the

dwelling of an unstained generation of man. The fate of our own country in this visitation may well exercise the deepest interest of piety and human nature. She may be severely tried; it is scarcely conceivable that in so vast an extent of suffering she should remain untouched. But she has been hitherto sustained in a manner little short of miracle.

In the great trial which has so lately passed upon Europe, England was of all nations placed in the most direct road of peril. In the Revolutionary race we had the natural means, and hereditary powers, the right, to have flung even France behind; a more democratic constitution, a more democratic spirit than any other monarchical people; a national character, more daring, disciplined, and obstinate; a bolder and more numerous array of the higher ranks on the popular side; our means of public correspondence more rapid and more secure; our means of public inflammation more prepared by the general habits of the people. The press, an open and inexhaustible armoury of weapons, old and new, which no power of government could shut upon the people, and where the sound of the insurrectionary workman was ringing day and night; itself threw all the capabilities of foreign rebellion into scorn. The defilement of the British throne,

and the triumph of faction, fierce passion, and lust of power, would have found us no novices; we should have been driven to no obscure search among the reliques of the middle ages, like our neighbours, for the Revolutionary costume. We had the whole picture-gallery of subversion among our heirlooms, scarcely a century old; and had but to follow the fashions of men, whose names were familiar as household words, whose desperate triumphs were recorded before our eyes, and whose blood was still running through our bosoms. Yet from this unrivalled peril England was saved; and more than saved; raised to be successively the refuge, the champion, and the leader of the civilized world.

In all the interpositions of Providence the fewness of the instruments is a distinguishing feature. In the commencement of the great European conflict, a mighty mind stood at the head of English affairs, a man fitted, beyond all his predecessors, for the crisis; gifted with all the qualities essential to the first rank in the conduct of Empire; an eloquence singularly various, vivid, and noble; a fortitude of soul that nothing could shake or surprize; a vigour and copiousness of resource inexhaustible. Yet he had a still higher ground of influence with the nation, in his unsullied honour, and superiority to all the baser objects of public

life; the utter stainlessness of his mind and habits; the unquestioned purity of that zeal which burned in his bosom, as on an altar, for the glory of England. The integrity of PITT gave him a mastery over the national feeling, that could not have been won by the most brilliant faculties alone. In those great financial measures, rendered necessary by the new pressure of the time, and on which all the sensitiveness of a commercial people was alive, the nation would have trusted to no other man. But they followed Pitt with the profoundest reliance. They honoured his matchless understanding; but they honoured still more the lofty principle and pure love of country, that they felt to be incapable of deception.

The British minister formed a class by himself. He was the leader, not only of English council, but of European. He stood on an elevation, to which no man before him had ascended. He fought the battle of the world, until the moment when the struggle was to be changed into victory; he died in the night of Europe, but it was when the night was on the verge of dawn. If it could ever be said of a minister, that he concentrated in himself the mind and heroic heart of an Empire, that he was at once the spirit and the arm of a mighty people, Pitt was that man!

Another extraordinary intellect was summoned

for a separate purpose, scarcely less essential. The Revolutionary influence had made its way extensively through the country. A crowd of daring writers, from whose pens every drop that fell was the venom of atheism and anarchy, were labouring to pervert the public into general rebellion. Success had made them insolent; and the country was filled with almost the open array of revolt. The connexion with France was palpable; for every hue of tempest in that troubled sky there was a corresponding reflexion in our own; we had the fêtes, the societies, and the spirit of France; every burst of strange fire from the wild and bloody rites that Republicanism had begun to celebrate flashed over our horizon; every voice of its fantastic and merciless revelries found an echo on our shore.

BURKE arose; his whole life had been an unconscious preparation for this moment. His early political connexions had led him close enough to democracy, to see of what it was made, like Milton's Sin,

> ——— " woman to the waist and fair,
> " But ending foul in many a scaly fold."

His parliamentary life had deeply acquainted him with the hollowness and grimace, the selfish

disinterestedness, and the profligate purity of faction; and armed in panoply, he took the field. He moved among the whole multitude of querulous and malignant authorship a giant among pigmies, he smote their Babel into dust, he left them without a proselyte or a name. His eloquence, the finest and most singular combination that the world has ever seen of magnificent fancy and profound philosophy, yet too deliberate, too curious in its developements, for the rapid demands of public debate, here found its true region, here might gather its strength like cloud on cloud, touched with every glorious colour of heaven, till it swelled into tempest, and poured down the torrents and the thunders. No work within human memory ever wrought an effect so sudden, irresistible, and saving, as the book on the French Revolution. It instantly broke the Revolutionary spell; the national eyes were opened. The fictitious oracles, to which the people had listened as to wisdom unanswerable, were struck dumb in the moment of the true appearing. The nobles, the populace, the professions, the whole nation from the cottage to the throne, were awakened, as by the sound of a trumpet; and the same summons, which awoke them, filled their spirits with the patriot ardour that in the day of battle made them invincible. Burke, too, made

a class in himself. As a public writer he had no equal and no similar; his place was alone. Like Pitt, when his labour was done, he died!

England had now been prepared for war; and had been purified from disaffection. Her war was naval, and her fleets, commanded by a succession of brave men, had been continually victorious. But a struggle for life and death was to come. From 1798, France was in the hands of Napoleon. His sagacity saw that England was the true barrier against universal conquest; and he forced the whole strength of Europe against her. A man was now raised up, whose achievements threw all the past into the shade. NELSON instantly transcended the noblest rivalry in a profession of talent and heroism. His valour and genius were meteor-like; they rose above all, and threw a splendour upon all. His name was synonymous with victory. He was the guiding star of the fleets of England. Each of his battles would have been a title to immortality; but his last exploit, in which the mere terror of his name drove the enemy's fleet before him through half the world, to be annihilated at Trafalgar, has no parallel in the history of arms. Nelson, too, made a class by himself. Emulation has never approached him. He swept the enemy's last ship from the sea; and,

like his two mighty compatriots, having done his work of glory, he died!

The Spanish insurrection, in scarcely more than two years after the death of Pitt and Nelson, let in light upon the world. England, the conqueror of the seas, was called to be the leader of the armies of Europe. A soldier now arose, equal to this illustrious task. He, too, has made a class by himself. But his praise must be left to the gratitude of his country, and to the homage of the future.

The true conclusion to be drawn from such remembrances is no idle human exultation in the exploits of England, but a justified and hallowed feeling that our preservation has been the especial act of Providence; that a succession of silent miracles have been wrought for our safeguard; and that it is by the out-stretched hand of Heaven that England has been borne unwounded through the mightiest of all wars, and has been finally raised to the summit of earthly power. To this the most glorious triumph ever given to the arm or counsel of man, would be trivial; yet we cannot doubt that this protection has been given, and that its gift was for the security of the true religion. Contemplations like those may cheer us in the coming of that still sterner trial, which is already shaking the ground under

every continental throne. In the deepest ruin of the day of terror the people of God will be secure, and alone secure. The increased dominion of the Church of England over the remote dependencies of the Empire within these few years, an increase without compulsion, in the spirit of the purest benevolence, and even already attended with the brightest promise of morals, knowledge, and the propagation of the Gospel; the encreased diligence among ourselves in providing for the public worship by additional Churches; and the encreased zeal for the religious knowledge of the people; are proofs that the Divine favour which raised, and has so long sustained the venerable establishment of this great Christian country, is not withdrawn; or even that it has looked down with a more protecting eye on our own day.

But, whatever shall be the sufferings of that fearful period, we have the highest declaration that they shall be boundlessly repaid by the coming of the KINGDOM OF GOD. The descriptions of the Apocalypse are veiled in the symbolic language of prophecy, and are to be fully interpreted only by the event. But in the Gospels and Epistles there are distinct indications, though generally overlooked, of many circumstances of the future; a change in the human

nature, in the social state, in the intellectual capacity, in the nobler affections; the whole exalting the Christian to a rank of power and actual splendour immeasurable by our present faculties, and preparing him to be an "heir of God, and joint heir of Christ," in itself a promise of unimaginable glory.

END OF THE HISTORY.

THE

TEMPTATION OF OUR LORD.

During a thousand years, Popery was the sole religion of Europe, for the Church was scarcely visible. When Protestantism began to appear, the Popish loss of numbers was made up by the growing population of the new world. Supposing the whole Papal population to have been one hundred millions, renewed even but twice in a century, the result in a thousand years is a number that overwhelms the mind. Yet of this enormous multitude has Popery sent the whole to the grave—idol-worshippers, denied the light of Scripture, and substituting stocks and stones, reliques of old garments and dead bodies, imaginary saints, and the profaned memory of the true, for the one great Mediator, by whom alone man can have access to God.

That the perversion of God's truth to so vast a portion of mankind, two hundred times the existing population of the world, should have called forth the most solemn wrath of Providence, was

conformable to the whole tenour of the Divine intercourse with man. The Apocalypse, as the final prophecy, delivered on the commencement of the Christian dispensation, is accordingly throughout a description, a warning, and a judgment of the great Apostacy. But Popery had been already described in the other chief portions of the New Testament. In the Epistles, St. Paul gives a direct portraiture and prophecy of the assumption of Divine power, the yoke of ceremonies and celibacy, and the idolatry and miracle-working of Rome[1]. But a still more circumstantial detail, hitherto overlooked, is given in the Gospels. The "temptation of our Lord" is in all its parts a type, or visible prophecy, of the corruptions of Rome.

No passage of Scripture has hitherto more exercised, and baffled the labour of the commentators than our Lord's temptation. None of the hypotheses have been in any degree satisfactory.

Doddridge, Bishop Newcome, and others, look upon it merely as a proof of the virtues of Christ, and a consolation to us when we shall be under trial. But our Lord's virtues were sufficiently shown in the daily hardships of his life, and in the perverseness of his countrymen. The trial

[1] 2 Thess. ii. 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2, 3.

was secret, and therefore useless for all purposes of his public mission. It is also too remote and too peculiar to have any conceivable reference to the ordinary course of life.

Milton, in the "Paradise Regained," considers it as the actual conflict in which our redemption was won by the final overthrow of Satan.—But Satan returned, and the redemption was won upon the cross.

Among later writers Mr. Townsend[2] supposes it to have been analogous to Adam's temptation in the Garden, and that its degrees correspond with the pleasantness to the eye, sweetness to the taste, and power of knowledge in the forbidden fruit. But Adam was *not* tempted by the forbidden fruit. He was tempted by the voice of Eve. "Because thou hast *hearkened to the voice of thy wife,* and hast eaten of the tree," is the language of the Judge. The only Scriptural similitude of the first and second Adam is their being the heads of the two great races of mankind; Adam, the first-born of the earthly, Christ of the risen. There is also no possible correlative of Adam's trial, in Christ's casting himself from the pinnacle of the temple.

Dr. Miller, the last commentator, conceives the three successive trials to have been—1. To

[2] Harmony of the N. T.

admonish the Church against the evil of depending wholly on human means for salvation. 2. To caution Christians against the opposite evil of relying so implicitly on the support of the deity, as to abandon their own efforts. 3. To warn them against the corrupting influence of sensual gratification. But those lessons are too obvious to have required the teaching of miracle; they are the common and general teaching of Scripture; and besides, if they are deducible at all from the "temptation," it is only in the most shadowy and circuitous manner.

The theory which the present writer would offer, is, that the "temptation" is a direct prophetic symbol of the progress of Papal corruption.—THE THREE GREAT ÆRAS OF CRIME in the Church of Rome.

Our Lord, from the time of receiving the Spirit, was evidently the symbol of his Church. He is the "Temple[3]." And as the temple was the peculiar dwelling of the Divine influence and purity; so was our Lord, and so is the Church which he represents, in the midst of the various stains and profanations of the world.

The first trial is a solicitation to his hunger, to indulge itself. "Command that these stones be made bread." Our Lord's answer to the

[3] John ii. 19.

tempter is; that there are things more important to the well-being of man than mere food; That he liveth, "not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God;" that obedience to God is of more necessity than mere sensual food. It is a declaration against the sinful *indulgence of the sensual nature.*

The second trial is in the Jewish temple. The tempter bids him throw himself down from the pinnacle, for no other reason, than to show that he is the Son of God. "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down." Jesus rebukes him by "It is written, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." The rebuke is from a command against the practices of idolatry[4]. The temptation here was to a display of miracle, for the ostentatious purpose of obtaining personal honour. Our Lord's refusal is a declaration against the corrupt assumption of supernatural power.

The third trial is an offer of boundless temporal dominion, a supremacy over the world. "All these things will I give thee," is the language of the tempter. And the price of the supremacy is tremendous; "If thou wilt fall down and worship me." This is the consummate temptation. The God of this world could offer no

[4] Deut. vi. 14. Ye shall not go after other gods. 16. Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God.

higher reward than the possession of his own throne. He is rebuked again, and cast out from the presence of the Lord.

The whole series is fatally applicable to the progress of guilt in the Church of Rome.

The original state of Christianity was one of severe privation during nearly three hundred years. Like our Lord, the Church had scarcely received the descended Spirit, when it was led out from the baptism of the Holy Ghost, into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. The persecutions began with the preaching of the Apostles.

During the three centuries of Pagan severity the Church was, like our Lord, sustained fasting in the wilderness.

But, on the cessation of this period by the edict of Constantine, the Church was tempted by worldly gratification; it first felt the sensation of hunger for the food of this world, and its baser portion gave way to the tempter. "Passing rapidly from a condition of distress and persecution to the summit of prosperity, the Church degenerated as rapidly from her ancient purity; and forfeited the respect of future ages in the same proportion as she acquired the blind veneration of her own. *Covetousness* especially, became almost a *characteristic* vice. Valentinian I., in 370, prohibited the clergy from receiving

the bequests of women ; a modification, more discreditable than any general law could have been[5]."

The second trial was the corrupt assumption of supernatural power ; the pretence of miracle-working for the honour and emolument of the Romish Church. In the sixth century, Rome became the centre of all idolatry. Popes and priests, by the bones and relics of presumed martyrs, images of the Virgin, pictures of our Lord, every contrivance that could more deeply bewilder the minds of a half savage people, wrought pretended miracles eclipsing the most flagrant frauds of Paganism. "The western Churches were loaded with rites by Gregory the Great. He prescribed a new method of administering the Lord's Supper with a magnificent assemblage of pompous ceremonies. The places set apart for public worship were already very numerous ; but it was now, that Christians *first* began to consider those sacred edifices as the means of purchasing the favour and protection of the Saints, and to be persuaded that those departed spirits defended against evils of every kind the provinces, lands, cities, and villages, in which they were honoured in the temples. Many of the festivals seem to have been instituted on a *Pagan* model[6]."

[5] Hallam, Mid. Ages. ii. 199. [6] Mosheim, Cen. vi.

The rage for miracle-working now overran the whole Romish Church; the hunting for the bones of saints, became a title to sanctity. Images were declared to perform miracles, and Rome assumed to itself the whole honour of being the chief depositary of the insulted power of Heaven[7].

The third trial was the assumption of vast temporal dominion. This temptation, seized, as we have seen, upon the whole soul of Popery. In the thirteenth century, the Pope was the declared lord of this world. He dethroned, he made kings; he gave, and he took away kingdoms; he sat upon the haughtiest throne that the earth had ever seen, for his ambition domineered over body and spirit, the present and the future world; he bore the sceptre of the earth, he assumed to bear the keys of heaven and hell. "The dragon had given to him his seat, and his power, and great authority." He proclaimed himself the vicegerent of God; above all kings; incapable of being judged of man; more than man!

The fearful price of this supremacy was the worship of its Giver. Popery bowed down and worshipped. It fulfilled the will of Satan by blood. It *instantly* unsheathed the sword, and slaughtered by hundreds of thousands the faithful people who would not be its slaves and the

[7] Middleton. Letter from R[illegible].

slaves of its idolatry. Persecution is the declared work of Satan. "Behold, the *devil* shall cast some of you into prison that ye may be tried," is the prophecy of the Pagan persecutions. "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea, for the *devil* is come down among you having *great wrath*, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time," is the prophecy of the Popish persecutions.

The true Church had, from the beginning, rejected the successive allurements. The false Church had grasped at them all, and given itself over to the progress of covetousness, superstition, and slaughter.

A striking analogy subsists between the ancient Jewish corruptions and the Romish. The forty years in the wilderness, the period of miraculous sustenance, delivered the people into the ease of Canaan. Their first general corruption arose from the luxuries of life in the promised land. Their second was the public establishment of idolatry by the ten tribes, the setting up of the two golden calves on the death of Solomon. The third was the passion for temporal dominion; through which they rejected and slew the Messiah, and persecuted his disciples. The nature of the events varies, but the progress of the degeneracy is the same. But as Jesus and his disciples came a pure and separated body out of

that old corrupted Church, so came the reformed out of the Romish corruption; and as the disciples were preserved in the fall of Jerusalem, so shall the Church be preserved in the final visitation of the nominal Christian world.

Those æras of Romish crime are not the accidents and floating matters of history. They are bound to the greatest civil changes; the first, to the conversion of Constantine; the second, to the giving of the title of "Universal Bishop," the spiritual supremacy, by Justinian; and the third to the rejection of the German sovereignty, and the seizure of the temporal supremacy by Rome.

The *location* of the several trials is remarkable. The first is in the "wilderness," an emblem of the state of the Church when but just emerging from the Pagan persecutions. The second was in the temple; for idolatry sprang up in Rome only when she had become the presumed "Holy City." The third was on a high mountain; the usual scriptural emblem alike of a place of Pagan worship, and of temporal power; for the Pagan rites were frequently celebrated on mountain-tops, and they were the natural place of citadels. The two-fold sense was applicable to Rome, the head of idolatry and of temporal dominion.

The "temptation" and the Apocalypse are but the counterparts of each other; the one, at the commencement of our Lord's ministry [illegible]

and *visible* prediction, a condensation of the trials of the Church into a type; the other, at its close, copious and magnificent, a luminous expansion of the type into a prophecy.

At the same time, its typical nature does not preclude its having been an *actual test* of the virtues of our Lord.

The principal features of this explanation are here collected into one view [8].

THE TEMPTATION OF OUR LORD.

The fast in the wilderness. } Symbolizing { The Pagan Persecutions.

Place of the Miracles.	Miracles.	Things signified.	Æras.	Leading events.
I. The Wilderness	The change of the bread.	Early and sensual opulence of the Romish Church.	The fourth century and following.	The conversion of Constantine.
II. The Temple.	The casting from the pinnacle.	The pretence of working miracles, and Saint-worship.	The sixth century and following.	The title of Universal Bishop conferred by the Greek emperors.
III. The Mountain.	The vision of all kingdoms.	The universal temporal dominion of the Popes.	The thirteenth century and following.	The cession of the Sovereignty of the descendants of Charlemagne over Rome.

The visit of the angels. } Symbolizing { The future triumph of the Church of God.

[8] This theory was stated a few months since in a periodical publication.

APPENDIX.

THE labour of enumerating all the arrangements that have been proposed for the Apocalypse, would be so useless to the reader, that I shall confine myself to as few remarks as possible. Those arrangements may be placed in two classes. The older commentators, Sir Isaac Newton, Mede, Bishop Newton, Daubuz, and others, generally conceive the Seals, Trumpets, and Vials, to have been series, at once consecutive and comprehending each other; the last Seal containing the Trumpets, and the last Trumpet the Vials; the Seals ending with the conversion of Constantine, the Trumpets detailing the subversion of the Western Empire, and the Vials the general fall of the Church of Rome.

The later commentators, who have chiefly written since the beginning of the French Revolution, have changed the interpretation of the Vials; and, nearly preserving the former scheme of the Seals and Trumpets as to succession and objects, have devoted the whole seven Vials to a consecutive view of the fall of the French

monarchy. A remarkable error; they containing nothing on the subject.

Dean Woodhouse conceives the Seals to be a prediction of the state of the Church from the apostolic age to the end of the world; the Trumpets a distinct series representing the persecutions of the Church; and the Vials, the spiritual impurities and afflictions visited on its enemies.

Pastorini (Bishop Walmsley) conceives the three series to begin at the same period. The first Seal, the first age of conversion after the Pentecost,—the first Trumpet, the early sufferings of the Church,—and the first Vial, the simultaneous disturbances of the Roman Empire; the three series proceeding with a detail of the sufferings and triumphs of the Church of *Rome* to the close of the world.

Those arrangements cannot all be right; and if the one already proposed in this volume be right, they are all wrong; for it essentially differs from them all. It must be unnecessary to go into the proof of their inadequacy to explain the Apocalypse; the sufficient evidence is, the doubt of their interpretations which remains on the minds of pious men; and the public doubt whether the prophecy is capable of being interpreted at all.

Note p. 81.

"The summoner of the second seal is the bull," the Μοσχος. This was the prediction of the barbarian invasions. By a curious coincidence, the name belonged to the north. "The Muscovites were a colony of Mesech or Mosoch, called by the Greeks *Moschi*." (Wells's Geography, I. 158.)

Note p. 115.

"The Star burning as it were a lamp," has been sometimes presumed to symbolise the resignation of Augustulus, sometimes Arius, Mahomet, &c. To those the answer is, that the *brightness* of the star is an evidence of its purity; and that all the hypotheses are at utter variance with the position of the peculiar prophecy as to time.

Note p. 119.

The fourth Vial was interpreted a hundred years since of the wars of Louis XIV., by Robert Fleming, a minister of the Scots' Church; and his interpretation gives a remarkable evidence of the closeness with which the prophetic Data of the Apocalypse can approach to fact. "The pouring out of the fourth Vial must denote the humiliation of some eminent potentates of the Romish interest, whose coun-

tenance supports the Papal cause; and those therefore must be principally understood of the houses of Austria and Bourbon, though not exclusive of the other Popish princes. As to the remaining part of this Vial, I humbly suppose that it will run out *about* 1794! and perhaps the French monarchy may begin to be considerably humbled about that time: that whereas the present French king takes the *sun* for his emblem, and this for his motto, 'nec pluribus impar,' 'not equalled by many;" he may at length, or rather his successors, and the monarchy itself, at least before the year 1794, be forced to acknowledge that, in respect to neighbouring potentates, he is even 'singulis impar.'"

He further says: "If any require, whether the sun of the Popish kingdom is not to be eclipsed himself at length; I must positively assert he will; and we may justly suppose that the French monarchy, after it has *scorched* others, will itself consume by doing so towards the *end of the century*."—Discourse on the rise and fall of the Papacy, 1700.

Fleming must have arrived at his date of the French Revolution by ascertaining the connection of the fall of the monarchy with the end of the 1260 years, and reckoning those from Justinian. I had either not read, or had forgotten

his book, when the present interpretation was written; but I find that extracts from it had been extensively published at the beginning of the war.

Note p. 122.

The fifth Trumpet. This Woe has by the whole body of commentators, excepting Dean Woodhouse and Pastorini, been pronounced to be the Mahometan Invasion. The sufficient answer is the suitableness of the prediction to the more important catastrophe of our own day. But the old solution is totally imperfect on its own showing. If Mahomet was a star, he did not "fall from heaven," his authority was not overthrown. If the fallen star is to be Sergius, the Monk, he was too trivial a personage to stand in the front of such a prophecy; or if it is to be Phocas, or the Pope, they had nothing to do with the progress of the Mahometan arms. If the "five months" mean, according to the calculation appended to this theory, 150 years, or twice 150 years, they are inapplicable to the duration of the Mahometan conquests, which have lasted, under the Sultans, to our time.

In the prophecy, the sixth trumpet follows without any discoverable interval. But on this theory the interval is no less than six centuries,

from the original Mahometan conquests, to the victory of Ortogrul, in 1281. The four Sultanies of Bagdad, Damascus, Aleppo, and Iconium, are also supposed to be the "four angels." The interpretation, however, varies on this point, between Ortogrul and his three sons, who conquered; and Solyman Shah, who with his three sons was drowned. But what ground can there be for conceiving that those obscure and transitory barbarian tribes, or their forgotten leaders, should have been the object of a divine command, issued at the prayer of the Church for the destruction of the "destroyer?" or that the prayer of the Church should have been put up for the capture of Constantinople? or that the "year, day, and hour" appointed by Heaven for its victory, should have any reference to Mahomet II.'s astrology? or that a great event which is declared in the prophecy to be the *last but one* of European history, should have happened in either the seventh century or the thirteenth. Yet such are the immediate contradictions implicated in the hypothesis of the Mahometan invasion. The difficulties multiply, if any reference be made to the adjoining or parallel chapters. The whole conjecture is untenable.

Dean Woodhouse, feeling the difficulty, conceived that with trumpet to have designated the

Gnostic heresy, and the sixth, the Mahometan Invasion. But there is nothing in those predictions to justify our conceiving one of them to mean a religious controversy, and the other an open war. All the former chronological difficulties, too, lie equally against this conjecture.

Pastorini, in his zeal for Popery, determined of course, that Lutheranism is the offspring of the bottomless pit, and that the "woe" was a denunciation of the Reformed. He even hazarded the calculation, founded on the double period of five months, or 300 years, that Protestantism would end in "fifty or fifty-five years from the time of his writing," A.D. 1771; a calculation which lately revived his memory and his book, among those who could feel a pious interest in Protestant massacre in the year 1825. Time, the great interpreter, has shown the emptiness of the bishop's interpretation; and the remainder of his volume is valuable only as showing the absurdities into which an acute mind, for Dr. Walmsley enjoyed some mathematical reputation, may be betrayed by the rankness and blindness of Popery.

The general misconception has arisen from the mention of the Euphrates. Not suspecting the typical application of that name, and of every ancient name, in the prophecy; the

mentators followed the example of Mede, in whose day the Turks were still the bugbear of Europe; who, of course, looked for them in the prophecies; and like every man who can be satisfied with a mere unconnected similitude, found the similitude he sought for.

Note p. 202.

The usual interpretation of the seven heads of the dragon, or Paganism, is, the successive forms of government in ancient Rome. But this is insufficient; for Livy's [1] enumeration of kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, and consular tribunes, reaches down no further than to the capture by the Gauls, A.D. 364, thus omitting the Triumvirate, which yet was one of the most remarkable forms of the government. Tacitus [2] names six—kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, consular tribunes, and triumvirs. By this reckoning the Roman Emperors would form the seventh head; while the prophecy evidently marks the seventh as one existing at a remote period, and transmitting its authority directly into the hands of the Pope.

But other difficulties occur. The heads in the prophecy are all *crowned;* where were the crowns of the republican governors of Rome?

[1] "Quæ a condita urbe Roma ad captam eandem." L. vi. c. 1.

[2] Annal. l. i.

their possession of authority in the commonwealth is not enough to satisfy a symbol so peculiar. The heads all symbolise persecutors: where were the persecutions of the Republic? But a still stronger evidence is to be found in the language of the prophecy itself. The heads are distinctly referred to the prophetic "wild beasts," the leopard, the bear, and the lion. The Apostle sees Paganism in its imperial Roman state, which is pronounced its *sixth*; and he is referred to the emblems of Paganism in the Jewish days for its five previous states. In all those states it wore a crown. Assyria, Persia, &c. were kingly. Its last head was also kingly, and the crown was laid on Charlemagne in Rome.

Note p. 218.

The conjectural extravagancies on the number of the beast would make a long and erudite treatise. The mystical notions annexed by the Jews and Greeks to letters and numbers excited this fruitless ingenuity; and one of the most extraordinary circumstances in the subject is the variety of words which numerically correspond to the 666; Ο Νικητης, the conqueror, Antichrist, Γενσεριϰος, Genseric, the Vandal invader, &c. St. Jerome finds it in Ευανας, a serpent finder. It is in Βενεδικτος, the name of several Popes. Grotius

finds it in Ουλπιος, a name of Trajan. It has been tried upon Luther's name, and found in the fabricated word Λουθερανα. And also in Σαξονειος a Saxon, in allusion to his birth. Bishop Walmsley finds it in Μαομετις, Mahomet. Mr. Wrangham in Αποστατης, an Apostate; and among the latest conjectures is Βουνεπαρτη.

The Latin names are still more numerous and equally useless. "Vicarius filii Dei."—"Ludovicus."—"Silvester secundus."—"Linus secundus."—"D. F. Julianus Cæsar Atheus," &c. See "Clarke on the Dragon, Beast, and False Prophet."

The Popish interpretations of the Apocalypse by Bellarmin and others have not been adverted to in this volume, for they are occupied in the hopeless labour of fixing on Pagan Rome all the descriptions and denunciations that belong to the Popedom. Boundless perplexity must be the consequence of so essential an error in principle; and the few Popish works on the subject seem to be unread even by their own communion.

Note p. 236.

The reader will observe the additional force which the system adopted in the present volume derives from the close *connexion* of the three

epochs on which it is founded. The "1260 years" include the three: viz. the beginning of the Papal supremacy in 533, the end of its power of persecution in 1793, and the birth of the Inquisition in 1198, the 666th year from the beginning of the 1260. Each depends on its separate proof; yet if any one of the three be proved, the whole are established.

Note p. 417.

The opinions of intelligent men at the time generally attributed the French Revolution to religious decay.

"In short, to the errors and defects of Popery we cannot but impute in a great degree the origin of that revolutionary spirit which has gone so far towards the subversion of the ancient establishments of religion and civil government. The maintenance of opinions, unfounded on the authority of the Gospel and inconsistent with its purity, has given occasion to minds perhaps naturally averse to religion to reject the most valuable evidences of Christianity. By the abuses of religion such minds have been led into all the extravagancies of deism and atheism, of revolution and anarchy. They had not the discernment or candour to distinguish between Christianity and its corruptions. The conspi-

racy against the religion of Christ, which originated in those delusions, burst on the devoted monarchy of France." (Bishop of Durham's Charge. 1801. p. 2, 3.

"When I myself was in France in 1774," says Dr. Priestly, "I saw sufficient reason to believe, that *hardly any person of eminence in Church or state*, and especially in a great degree eminent in philosophy or literature, whose opinions in all countries are sooner or later adopted, were *believers in Christianity*. And no person will suppose that there has been any change in favour of Christianity in the last twenty years. [He writes in 1794.] A person, I believe, now living, and one of the best informed men in the country, assured me very gravely that, (paying me a compliment,) I was the first person he had ever met with, of whose understanding he had any opinion, who pretended to believe Christianity. To this all the company assented. And not only were the philosophers and other leading men in France, at that time unbelievers in Christianity, or deists, but *atheists*, denying the being of a God." (Fast Sermon.)

THE END.

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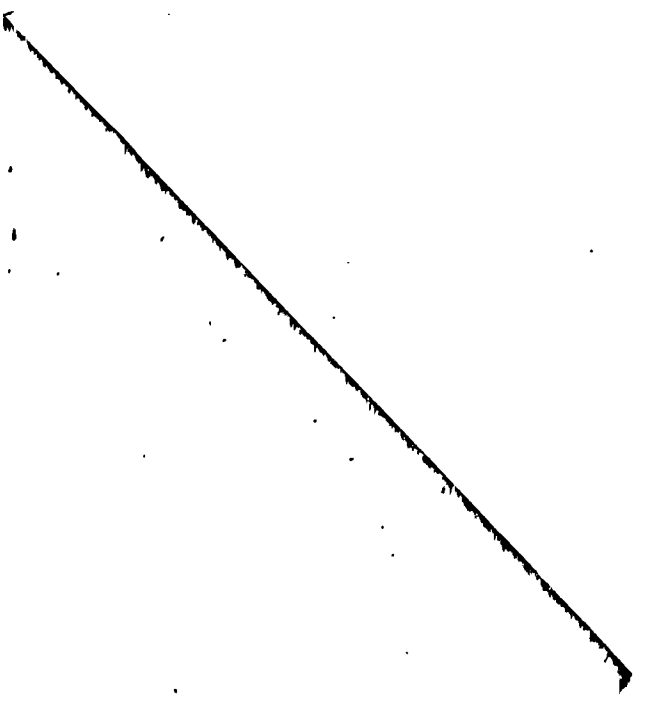

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